# HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE CONCEPT OF MEMORY

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## SUMMARY

During the second decade of the twentieth century, several European countries went through different circumstances that gave rise to, among other research topics, the exaltation of the study of memory as a social phenomenon. In these processes, multiple works were generated that today are considered as obligatory references in the study of this concept. This work of degree intends to approach the concept of memory using as a reference two of the works of authors born in the aforementioned period. To do so, we will use the contributions of Maurice Halbwachs *The social frameworks of memory* (2004) and Paul Ricoeur *Memory, history and forgetting* (2004).

Keywords: memory, collective memory, social frameworks, history, oblivion.

## INDEX

Anyone who has lived only in the present, without taking the time to recall his or her past, will find it very difficult to know who he or she is (Martínez, 2001). Memory, as we will see in the following lines, is in many cases a constitutive element of identity itself (De Zan, 2008). Throughout time, the concept of memory has been worked on from numerous perspectives and visions, which has resulted in a considerably high number of works and authors who handle the term in one way or another.

The following chapter aims to briefly analyze the works of singular characters and authors of memory in universal historiography, therefore, the way in which it is proposed to organize the content of this section, will be chronologically according to the different stages of history.

It is important to emphasize that for the purposes of Chapter I of our research, we have made an exhaustive selection of the main expositors of the study of memory in universal historiography. We have taken into account the works that have been most relevant in addressing the term (Ricoeur, 2004), having said this, we make it clear that the remaining authors have been left for further analysis.

Today we can find research that integrates the concept of memory in areas never before evaluated, the diversity that the analysis of this term has gained is particularly positive for those of us who consider memory a contemporary problem in our society. It is worth remembering that it was in the mid-twentieth century that memory began to climb the hierarchy in the academic world, due, among many other reasons, to historical events that marked in one way or another the lives of the authors to whom our work is owed (De Zan, 2008).

It is also important to emphasize the fact that, for the purposes of this chapter and for obvious reasons, we will not delve into the contributions of Maurice Halbwachs and Paul Ricoeur, since they are in themselves the reason for our research, so we will leave their appreciation for later chapters.

# 1. ANCIENT AGE

## 1.1 Plato and memory

Memory, seen as a point of reflection in the life of the human being, had its origin in Ancient Greece (Vernant, 1993). There are several Greek philosophers who contributed their knowledge to the field of our study; however, as in many other areas of knowledge, Plato is a constituent element of the classical theory of memory (Chacon, 2012). It will be he who explains the conditions in which evocation is generated.

Since the pre-Socratic stage, memory had been resounding as a subject of knowledge in the Greek community and began to take on a formal meaning from the approaches of Plato, who in turn, in the words of Angel Chacon (2012): "recovers from the pre-Socratics the ideas of immortality and transmigration of the soul of Pythagoras, the becoming of Heraclitus, the differentiation of the forms of knowledge of Parmenides and the dialectics of Zeno, among others" (p.140).

Plato took much of Pythagoras' thought to constitute his contributions regarding memory (Chacón, 2012). Firstly, the Pythagorean theory of *transmigration*, which defends the possibility of the soul to reincarnate continuously in different bodies (Molina, 1998).

According to Ignacio Molina (1998) this theory defended the idea that the individual could reach to know his previous lives, with an adequate training of the memory. According to many authors, Pythagoreanism is shown as a capital element in the creation of Plato's thought (Molina, 1998). The appearance of the soul in Plato's dialogues (1871), represents a break and a novelty in his discourse, this return is largely due to the contact that Plato could have had with the Pythagorean communities in his trip to Sicily (Vernant, 1993). From this new influence on the Platonic kosmos, the soul and anamnesis appear, both are first mentioned in the dialogue of the Menon (1871), to undergo a process of development in the following dialogues: The Phaedo, The Banquet and The Phaedrus.

> The first time in the history of Greek thought that the term anamnesis appears is in the Menon, a dialogue written by Plato after his return from his trip in 390 BC from Sicily, where he had come into contact with the Pythagorean communities. When Socrates asks what areté is, Menon, as a good student of the sophist Gorgias, answers by saying that there are several types of virtue, which is immediately rejected by the Socratic philosophy. After making his listener see that there must be a conception of universal areté, the conversation ends in an aporia, as on other occasions. How can one find what one does not know? And if he knows the object of his search, how will he know that he has finally found it? Menon admits that his mind has become paralyzed as if he had touched a stingray fish, Socrates with his usual irony replies that his ignorance must be contagious. At this point it is observed in the dialogue, as the rest of Platonic thought has taken a new course. (Molina, 1998, p.6)

Plato feels the impetuous task of advancing until he reaches knowledge. Socrates will resort to tradition as an answer, however this tradition is nothing more than memory or reminiscence for Plato (Vernant, 1993). For the philosopher, to know our past is undoubtedly to recognize our memory as something existing in the human soul. The soul, by recognizing an object, can trace back to the rest, since there would be a clear relationship between the part and the whole (Molina, 1998).

> Surprised by Socrates' argumentation, Menon asks him to give him a demonstration of everything he has said. Socrates agrees, initiating a conversation with Menon's slave, an uneducated man. By means of the usual system of questions and answers, Socrates helps his listener to find for himself the truth, which arises from his own spirit, concerning various problems of geometry and mathematics, extremely difficult even for a cultivated man, always obtaining the right answer. Having concluded the conversation with the slave, the dialogue returns to the question raised at the beginning of the dialogue, as to whether it is possible to teach the Areté, and he obtains an affirmative answer. After having defended the theory that to know is to remember, knowledge seems to be doomed to the very nature of the individual, from which it must necessarily start, since both Plato and Socrates thought that all knowledge was internal, unlike the Sophists who considered it as something transferable between teacher and student. (Molina, 1998, p.6).

It is not life itself that makes a human being alive, it is the soul (Plato, 1871). According to Plato, the soul is immortal and indestructible, capable of recalling and embracing in its mind millions of memories that make its experience in life something profitable, regardless of its human condition. The soul contaminated by pleasures will be punished, while the spirit of the philosopher is rewarded (Molina, 1998).

The Phaedo (1871), on the other hand, presents notorious differences with respect to the Menon (Guthrie, 1984). It will be the first time that Plato expresses his theory of ideas in a clear way, appearing strongly identified with anamnesis, which he uses as proof of the immortality of the soul. In this dialogue, the soul is clearly differentiated from the body, more than in any other case, there being a total rupture between the two. (Guthrie, 1984, p.73).

In the Phaedrus (1871) the evolution of the Platonic conception of the soul and the theory of anamnesis continues, perhaps reaching its most important pages (Molina, 1998). Through the use of myths, as was common for the time, the psyche is related to a moving object. The knowledge of the soul starts from the development of memory from the use of the senses (Chacón, 2012). Ignacio Molina (1998) comments that it is through reading, according to Plato, that we can know the different forms of our being. In the words of Molina (1998) "while with letters the soul will know reality with forms external to its own being, in anamnesis where memory plays a fundamental role, knowledge springs from within." (p.7)

Again we will see the use of metaphors to exemplify the ways in which memory develops in Plato. In the dialogue Theaetetus (1871) Plato talks about the process of learning and

compares it to taking birds and putting them in the aviary, here Socrates reveals that the aviary into which the birds are put is empty when we are born. This statement supports the idea of "movement" and knowledge of the soul through the senses and memory. (Chacon, 2012).

Plato -like many other citizens- was aware that he lived in a world where everything was subject to change. Let us remember that oblivion at this time is associated with death, so that the consciousness of becoming implies the need for stability (Vernant, 1993). This vital urgency is alleviated by Plato, as is well known, through the creation of the theory of Ideas (Guthrie, 1984). Platonic reminiscence responds to a need inherent in all Greeks: the temporal becoming (Vernant, 1993). Plato finds a different objective than the Pythagoreans, he, unlike them, does not seek but to unite with the divine through memory and the transcendent character of this (Chacon, 2012). He will come to create a bridge between the temporal and the eternal.

## 1.2 Aristotle and memory

Aristotle, born in 384 B.C. into a family of physicians, showed interest in the study of the human body and living beings from a very early age, dedicating his first contributions to the field of medicine in a very empirical way (Guthrie, 1984). In contrast to this early attitude, after Plato's death in 347 B.C., Aristotle began a period of travels that would later consolidate the structure of the philosopher's characteristic thought (Samaranch, 1962).

Aristotle's approach to the study of memory deals decisively with the problem of life in general (Samaranch, 1962). In his work *Del sentido y lo sensible, de la memoria y el recuerdo* (1962) Aristotle offers a compendium of ideas that link man and his soul with memory from a phenomenological point of view (Samaranch, 1962).

He establishes that the soul is what shapes and gives meaning to life, being itself, therefore, elementally self-movement. Therefore, the soul will also be self-movement (Samaranch, 1962, p.5). Aristotle assumes the reality that life and the self-movement to which he refers are conditioned by the world, the environment and circumstances (Samaranch, 1962).

This set of things that surround the living being are those that offer it food, those that provide it with the means to breathe or to encourage, to feel and to crave. All this mobile system is, in turn, controlled and dominated by other superior movements, hierarchically staggered (Samaranch, 1962, p. 5).

For Aristotle the soul, in fact, means the whole, the meaning and the ultimate end of a living body and it is precisely by virtue of this totality of meaning that the body comes to become living, which is the totality of all the elements that condition life in one way or another. (Aristotle, 1962, p.32).

In *Del sentido y lo sensible, de la memoria y el recuerdo* (1962) Aristotle establishes the existence of two souls, a vegetative soul (which responds to growth) and on the other hand a sensitive soul (which responds in relation to the circumstances we have already mentioned) this

soul appears in the animal kingdom (Samaranch, 1962). It is precisely in this lower soul that Aristotle seems to situate the entelechy or act of the living being as such: the soul of sensibility, more specifically, which could include memory (Vernant, 1993).

The interaction between man and his environment, Aristotle declares, is necessarily essential to keep alive the *sensitive soul* (Aristotle, 1962). All the communications of the particular senses (sight, touch, hearing, smell and taste) are gathered in this, in a kind of common sense, which corresponds to the modern term of psychological consciousness. (Samaranch, 1962. Page 5).

Regarding the concept of memory, Aristotle states that the sensory contents do not always disappear with the object; he establishes that in many cases they persist or are reproduced in what we can call memory (Samaranch, 1962. Page 12).

More specifically in relation to memory Aristotle states:

> Memory has for its object the past; no one could claim to remember the present while it is present. For example, one cannot remember a particular white object while one is looking at it, any more than one can remember the subject of a theoretical speculation while one is presently speculating about it and thinking about it. It is only said that one perceives the former, and knows the latter. But, when one has knowledge or sensation of something without the actualization of these faculties, then one is said to remember, for when a man exercises his memory, he always says in his mind that he has heard, felt, or thought that before. (Aristotle, 1962, p. 44)

The philosopher approaches the study of the phenomenon of memory from a purely metaphysical perspective, and according to Francisco Samaranch (1962), the treatise *Del sentido y lo sensible, de la memoria y el recuerdo* (1962) has as its ultimate goal "to explain the potentiality of the mind for the cognizable" (p.4). The philosopher hypothetically states that the mind is like an unwritten tablet, which nevertheless possesses, in a potential way, the letters of the possible or future message (Aristotle, 1962).

> Memory, then, is neither sensation nor judgment, but a state or affection of one of these things, after some time has elapsed. All memory or recollection implies, then, an interval of time. For this reason, only those living beings that are conscious of time can be said to remember and they do this with that part of the soul that is conscious of time. (Aristotle, 1962, p.45)

Aristotle approaches and understands memory from a point of view less bound to the limitations imposed by his own physical theories (Guthrie, 1984). Several authors agree that Aristotle's dominant power of analysis even surpassed his master Plato on several issues (Guthrie, 1984).

> We have thus explained what memory or remembering is: we have said that it is a state produced by a mental image, referred, as a likeness, to that of which it is

an image; and we have also explained to what part of us it belongs: namely, that it belongs to the primary sensitive faculty, that is, to that with which we perceive time. (Aristotle, n.d. p.47)

Memory itself, from Aristotle's point of view, would then be the possession of the image, a possession that inevitably implies the conjunction of thought and therefore its critical apparatus, a unique and characteristic property of the human being (Samaranch, 1962). Thus the task of remembering is something that derives from and implies intelligence related to the passage of time. This relation, as Aristotle says in chapter 2, can be exact or indeterminate, but it undoubtedly exists (Samaranch, 1962).

The reflections carried out by Aristotle with respect to the subject in question, establish from antiquity, antecedents that will later open the way to the study of memory as a problem of the philosophy of history. The approach from the paradigm of antiquity provides scholars of memory and recollection with an alternative vision to the contemporary one (Vernant, 1993).

## 2. AVERAGE AGE

### 2.1 St. Augustine and memory

Entering the medieval scenario, one of the most important philosophers who makes specific reference to the phenomenon of memory is St. Augustine. The relevance of this philosopher for the study of memory lies in the fact that he is considered by many authors as the bridge between the ancient and the medieval world (Sörgel, 2008).

Among his achievements is the distinctive ability to embrace the past and create from his own religious experiences and experiences a synthesis to lay the foundations of Christianity (Sörgel, 2008). His contributions to the cathedratic world of memory have been linked by U. Dalferth (1998) to recognized contemporary works such as those of Sigmund Freud, Paul Ricoeur and C.G. Jung, to name a few.

The Confessions (2007) of St. Augustine, specifically book X, provides his major reflections on memory (Sörgel, 2008). Its writing, possibly between 397 and 401, occurs at the time when St. Augustine begins his bishopric in Hippo (Sörgel, 2008).

Divided by Rainer Sörgel (2008) the following scheme is established: Books I-IX are taken as an autobiographical narrative; book X (the most pertinent to our research) refers to the author's relationship with God at the time of his writing and finally books XI-XIII which Sörgel (2008) assumes as the praise of the Creator and eternity in a reflective style. Following this division, very clearly book X (book ten) of *Confessions* (2007) is determined in something like an axis; making of mediation and bridge between past and present (Sörgel, 2008).

In other words, Augustine wanted -consciously or unconsciously- to exalt the mediating function of memory also at the literary level, placing it in book X, that is, between his personal

biography and the reflection on creation, between the past of the self and the eternity of the Creator (Ruoff, 2017).  It will be in this section, where we can locate his reflections on personal memory as a way of introspection.

By way of a soliloquy in *Confessions* (2007), St. Augustine tries to expose his own deliberation with respect to various questions relevant to memory.  After searching outside himself, St. Augustine chooses to search within himself, since he could not find the answers outside, neither in philosophical currents nor in nature itself. That is when he asks himself: "And you, who are you? (St. Augustine, 2007).

It is worth mentioning the observation of Fuhrer (2004), who states that Augustine, being a follower of Plotinus, understood memory as a tool for spiritual ascent, that is, in other words, facing the great intuitions about memory, Saint Augustine decided to bet on memory as a means for transcendence towards God. (Sörgel, 2008).

The search within is, in reality, an "ascent by degrees" (…) through the "fields and wide bosoms of memory". There lies the immense "treasure of innumerable images" (St. Augustine, 2007. P.144).  St. Augustine arrives at one of the main functions of memory: remembering. Through the various senses (sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste), all kinds of information enter the memory and are stored in the form of images (Fuhrer, 2004). Augustine will marvel, for example, at the possibility of perceiving again the scent of a flower without necessarily holding it in his hands, just using the scent "filed" in his memory, and so on with all things (Sörgel, 2008).

The memory *room* must be immense. Everything, heaven and earth, is present there (St. Augustine, 2007).  What was experienced in the past can be relived in the present, which facilitates, according to Sörgel (2008), an evaluation of the future. Memory is, in *Confessions* an organ of representation where past, present and future are able to unite and present themselves in different forms (Sörgel, 2008).

Appearing here a little of what would be the transcendental dimension of memory:

> Great is the energy (vis) of memory and something that causes me horror, my God: infinite and profound multiplicity. And this is the soul, and this am I myself. What am I, then, my God? What nature am I? Varied and multiform life, and exceedingly immense. See me here in the fields and dens and innumerable caverns of my memory, filled innumerably with innumerable kinds of things, already by their images, like those of all the bodies (…) Through all these things I wander and fly to and fro and penetrate when I can, without reaching the end anywhere. Such is the virtue of memory, such is the virtue of life in a man who lives mortally! (St. Augustine, 2007. P.155)

The effort made by the Philosopher to understand his memory inevitably leads him to an alternative objective, which is self-knowledge (Sörgel, 2008), to a kind of encounter with himself and to the rediscovery of the individual.

Compiling the works around the analysis of Confessions, the authors Ruoff (2008), Fuhrer (2004) and Sörgel (2008) seem to agree that memory seen from the Augustinian perspective, can be summarized in three points: possibility of metaphysics, mediation capacity and principle of personal consciousness. (Ruoff, 2017, p.132.) Additionally memory becomes the place of encounter with God and the possibility of openness and transcendence. (Sörgel, 2008)

Citing St. Augustine himself, Rainer Sörgel (2008) supports his assertion:

> What shall I do then, O you, my true life, my God? Shall I also transcend this energy of mine which is called memory? Shall I transcend it in order to reach you, most sweet light? What do you say? Behold, ascending by the soul towards you, who are above me, I will also transcend this faculty of mine which is called memory, wanting to touch you by where you can be touched and to adhere to you by where you can be adhered (...) I will transcend, then, even the memory to reach him who separated me from the quadrupeds and made me wiser than the birds of the sky; I will transcend, yes, the memory. But where shall I find thee, O thou truly good and sure gentleness, where shall I find thee? In the vast fields of my memory I shall find thee (St. Augustine, 2007. P.164).

Memory is really the place and the organ where these three realities (past, present, future) converge in such a way that it is impossible to understand them in isolation (Sörgel, 2008, p.7). All things are in memory, because although it is true that in reality they are outside, man, in this case St. Augustine, can go through his memory as if it were a world apart, but in reality he lives in the world that is outside, present and alive. (Sörgel, 2008).

Finally, we can establish that from the text *Confessions* (2007), memory is characterized as a principle of personal consciousness or an alternative way to self-knowledge. Theresa Fuhrer (2004) draws attention to the fact that introspection has led Augustine to define a new theory of consciousness. Although Augustine takes up Plato's nemonic theory, he extends it to a principle of personal integration that as such was not known in antiquity (Sörgel, 2008, p.6). Connie Ruoff (2008) in order to delimit the tendency with respect to Augustine's approach, refers to it as totally individualistic, emphasizing the fact that no social or collective element appears as it is common to see after the medieval civilization in the professors of the modern and contemporary age.

## 2.2 St. Thomas and memory

Since ancient times, the statement "know thyself" motivated every philosopher to take root in the study of self-consciousness (Forment, 2001). It will be no surprise then that professors such as St. Augustine and St. Thomas, recognized philosophers of the medieval age, incur in the study of memory, linking any of their writings with theology.

There are many Augustinian Platonic doctrines, which belong in a very central way to the philosophical synthesis of St. Thomas, and which are part of its foundations (Forment, 2001).

Their contents, used in an original way, are perfectly coupled with Aristotelian philosophy. Saint Thomas explains, when assuming this doctrine in his work *Summa Theologiae* (2001) that "memory, according to Saint Augustine, is nothing other than the habitual retention of knowledge and love" (Saint Thomas, 2001, p.82).

> Man is the image of God through his spirit, which materializes in his dimensions of mind, knowledge and love. The mind, as stated in the metaphysics of the spirit of St. Augustine, is the same spiritual being, immaterial, subsistent, intelligible to itself and intellectual; the news or knowledge is the knowledge that the soul has of itself; and love is that which it has for itself. By all three, it is the image of the Trinity (Martinez, 2001. P.92).

St. Thomas will explain that self-consciousness is not properly a quality attached to rationality, but rather a quality proper to being (Forment, 2001). In his words: "To return to its essence does not mean anything else but to subsist the thing in itself" (Saint Thomas, 2001, p.96). To keep present in consciousness is to subsist in oblivion and therefore to remain alive beyond the "thing"; it is to transcend beyond the tangible (Forment, 2001).

That is why St. Thomas allows himself to suggest the hypothetical existence of a subsistent area, capable of knowing itself thanks to the immateriality of its being: "If an area could be subsistent by itself without matter, it would understand itself, because the immunity of matter is the essential reason of intellectuality" (St. Thomas, 2001, p.101).

> The intelligibility of the soul's own substance - not of its act of understanding this or that, not even the act of understanding here and now its own existence - can be understood in the line of infinity, that is, as a permanent disposition to perfect itself according to its own nature, a permanent disposition to understand this or that and, above all, itself, and which is prior to the illumination of images and the intellection of species. (St. Thomas, 2001, p.101).

Similar in some senses to Augustinian thought, memory is characterized as the ability of the soul to remember itself, identical in time (Sörgel, 2008). Knowing oneself is a permanent quality of human intelligibility in St. Thomas, the habitually present knowledge. (Martinez, 2001).

He refers to memory as that unthought-of presentiality of knowledge that is always present (Santo Tomas, 2001). Separating it from the faculty of memory, since on the one hand memory should not be required by learning, nor should it be attributed to the mere capacity of retaining what is already known. St. Thomas notes in his work Di Veritate (1996) that the habitual knowledge of one's own existence, or existential memory, is not identical to that of the cognitive habits of the understanding.

The intelligibility goes beyond the capacities that the senses bring to our life, even beyond the intellective memory, the memory as it is seen as self-consciousness prior to the intellection of the species (Martinez, 2001). With respect to this, Saint Thomas will affirm that "news and love, habitually turned, belong only to memory" (Saint Thomas, 2001. P.101).

Memory is understood in itself as an act that subsists in the soul, understanding as part of it the exercise of its powers and the intelligible capacity of the same. St. Thomas (2001) affirms that: "It is connatural to the human understanding to see the intelligible species in images (...) However, intellectual knowledge does not consist in those images, but to contemplate in them the pure truth" (St. Thomas, 2001. P.68). (Santo Tomas, 2001. P.68)

Martínez (2001) will add: "This is, as is well known, the function of the agent understanding, which illuminates the impressed species that reach it by means of sensibility and which in the text of St. Thomas is clearly identified with "the light of our soul" (p.85). The knowledge of one's own being, the openness to all true judgment and the love by which one wants the good, become in this way, according to Forment (2001), the keys to understand the rational life according to St. Thomas.

## 3. MODERN AGE

## 3.1 Descartes and memory

If the approach to memory in ancient times had taken objective reality as a starting point and medieval times had taken God in the same way, it would later be modern philosophy that would settle on the terrain of subjectivity (Valdez, 1937).

The philosopher to whom we will allude at first to situate the memory in modernity is René Descartes, born 1596 in Touraine. After his first years of work in 1627, his peers encouraged him to reform philosophy for the sake of religion, which echoed in the philosopher's mind, confirming his awareness of his "divine mission". (Valdez, 1937)

According to Descartes' "I think therefore I am", the key test to determine this as certain or uncertain, is to confirm by self-consciousness that there is mental activity (Descartes, 1983, p.415). Descartes added something that was key and that is: one exists as a *substance*. The definition of substance for Descartes applies to finite beings, referring to spirit and matter (Descartes, 1983). Substance constitutes a duality that is imposed on thought and perception (Valdez, 1937, p.556).

Memory in Descartes is a kind of foundation of the subject (Rojas, 1998). Descartes considers memory as one of the resources to "Have a distinct intuition about simple propositions, or to put between the things sought and those that are known a convenient link that allows to know them, or to find the things to be compared between them" (Descartes, 1983, p.410). (Descartes, 1983, p.410.) Descartes' evaluation points to memory as one of the human faculties that serve to know, but in no way is it capable of arriving at the truth; a possibility that remains for the understanding alone. (Rojas, 1998).

This phenomenon is crystallized in Descartes as follows: "the movement of the external sense is produced by the object, the figure it constitutes is transported to the body. This fantasy is part of the body. Printed figures or ideas can be retained for quite a long time."

(Descartes, 1983, p.423.), to this Descartes qualifies as memory, being very strongly linked the "impressions" of objects and experiences with theories of thought (Rojas, 1998).

> Thus, I am not alone in the world. The cause of my ideas accompanies me. God exists, then, even if the idea of substance is in me, from this very fact that I am a substance, I would not have, however, the idea of an infinite substance, I who am finite.... God is in me as an innate idea (Descartes, 1983, p.423).

Once again, this phenomenon is linked to the figure of God. Somehow this process is the support of the immutability of things, becoming a memory in the face of the variability of sensations (Valdez, 1937, p.437). The access to truths according to Descartes, is nothing but the access to the great memory that is God, the memory seen as a rest for reasoning (Rojas, 1998).

Gueroult (1970) establishes in his work *Studies on Descartes, Spinoza, Malebranche and Leibniz* three definitions with respect to the idea of memory in Descartes: a psychological one, a phenomenological one consisting in the representation of things and the third is the so-called metaphysical one, that which possesses an objective value, that is, the idea of which the understanding cannot doubt about its objective reality. This third is the one that, according to Gueroult (1970), must be taken into consideration.

Reminiscence supposes either an effort or a spontaneous action, in the recovery of images (Descartes, 1983). If there is effort, i.e., a will to remember, error is possible. Descartes feared that memory would be affected by imagination in the process of remembering and that it would make the cognitive process impossible (Rojas, 1998, p.309).

It is true that Descartes was not strictly speaking a philosopher of memory (Gueroult, 1970), but it should be noted that he worked in various ways on the link between memory and the deductive apparatus, and it is because of this method that today we reason our memories in unique ways. Descartes puts memory in the background, but his contributions are of great value for the historiographical follow-up of the concept.

## 3.2 Locke and memory

To renew the foundations of modern philosophy and what we nowadays call western values, the diplomat and philosopher John Locke arrived, who coupled with his liberal vision of philosophy, economics and politics broke barriers with respect to the reflections that were being generated in these sciences (Kasper, 2005). His contributions to this work are highly appreciated, since they add a very important element linked to memory; identity from an individual point of view (Candau, 2008).

New are the visions that begin to haunt the academies in the modern age, a new spectrum runs through academic circles and the various currents of thought: the problematic of identity (Souroujon, 2011). The modern individual is imposed in a world in which he must rethink the

relationship around the nation-state, the party, the class and his individual identity (Kasper, 2005). Generating a new orphanhood in the individual, who after having lost in the eighteenth century the transcendent God proposed by religion, now finds himself deprived of these immanent gods (Souroujon, 2011).

Parallel to the advances around identity, this period also assumes as a subject of reflection the concept of memory, a phenomenon that can hardly (especially for Locke) be conceived separately, making it difficult to study one without listening to the echoes of the other (Candau, 2001, p.14). As Joel Candau (2001) suggests, memory and identity are in a dialectical relationship, because although memory is the generator of identity: "identity stands as a framework of selection and signification of memory, so it is futile to understand them as a cause and effect relationship, both concepts being so closely interpenetrated" (Candau, 2001, p.16).

The ideas that we can extract from Locke in his work *Essay on Human Understanding* (1999) are an obligatory point of reference to understand the process and transformation that individuality underwent in the modern period of history, Locke being considered by many authors such as Candau (2001), Ricoeur (2000) and Souroujon (2011) among many others, as the first philosopher who isolated the notion of identity from any kind of metaphysical substance (as we have seen that the authors before him were doing) to found it on consciousness itself.

In this regard we can take the following statement from Locke (1999):

> We must now consider what is meant by a person [...] a thinking being endowed with reason and who can regard himself as the same [...] as a thinking thing in different times and places; which he does only by virtue of his having consciousness [...[...] and so far as that having consciousness can stretch backwards to comprehend any past action or any past thought, so far does it reach the identity of that person: it is the same self now as it was then; and that past action was performed by the same self as the self that now reflects on it in the present (Locke, 1999, p.318).

Soujouron (2011) will validate this *revolution* in the history of ideas initiated by Locke:

> Personal identity is based on the continuity of consciousness, whose orientation towards the past is given as memory, which plays a privileged role in the constitution of personal identity. Memory, as a consciousness that looks back, is the one that recovers the various acts of the past and connects them as acts of the same self that it remembers (Soujouron, 2011, p. 34).

Identity with Locke is closely linked to memory, thanks to the fact that it extends as far as the memories of a solitary consciousness reach, forgetting constantly appearing as a threat that condemns identity (Bodei, 2006). In Locke, memory consists of a constant challenge on oneself to keep memories in consciousness, given that losing memories supposes that these

events have been lived by another person different from the self who cannot appropriate them (Bodei, 2006).

The English philosopher builds a wall in the process of identity constitution, between consciousness and external elements, such as society, language, and tradition (Ricoeur, 2004), a wall that is embedded in the very heart of liberal thought and its reflection on the subject's identity (Kasper, 2005).

It is on the basis of memory as consciousness, on which Locke will found the possibilities of law. Reward or punishment in relation to past actions, and his notion of self-responsibility. For "Only a conscience capable of accounting for its own acts and of caring for its future happiness can be the precinct of imputation of actions and merits" (Soujouron, 2011, p. 38).

However Locke, will not establish a direct connection between the past and the future (Soujouron, 2011), i.e. no hint of turning memory into a narrative exercise is visualized in his work, (unlike how we can see Ricoeur,) being this later, what can build a coherent thread, thus imbuing identity with meaning.

## 3.3 Hume and memory

As we have seen, with Locke it was written that memory does not go beyond the reach of *consciousness* (Kasper, 2005). But with the empiricist David Hume (1711-1776), it became more evident that consciousness is nothing more than an "accidental" act; that the subject is not properly a substance (as Descartes claimed), but the act of remembering or becoming aware of time (Daros, 2009).

The development of ideas and the awareness of impressions as acts, will be for David Hume (2001) proof that we have memory (Daros, 2009). Strength and vivacity are recurrently named terms in Hume's work, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (2001).

With respect to this idea of vivacity and strength, it refers to the contiguity that one has with the object of memory (Daros, 2009). The ideas that are the object of memory can also be transformed, by their vivacity into beliefs, related to this, Hume affirmed:

> When I see a red tomato I get an impression of redness. Then, when I remember the red tomato, what I have in mind is the idea of redness. The same happens when I think of red tomatoes or when I desire a red tomato. In all these cases what comes to mind is, among other things, the idea of redness. This idea of redness (object of memory, thought or desire) has its causal origin in the impression of redness. Impressions are the causal source of the universe of ideas. Memory, the act of remembering, constitutes a mental state whose object is an idea linked to an impression. Treatise on Human Nature (Hume, 1739, p.373)

In Hume, memory is considered as a means that not only discovers, but also coins the idea of personal identity (Candau, 2000). Regarding this relationship Daros (2009) states that memory in Hume "discovers and produces the idea of personal identity in relation to the association of resemblance. It produces and discovers the idea of personal identity in relation to the association of causality" (Daros, 2009, p.51).

In this Daros (2009) points out that:

> Hume points out that the first cause that leads us to believe in the idea of personal identity lies in the nature of imagination and, above all, of memory. It is evident that the imagination feels that perceptions exist linked in an orderly way which allows their association. What happens is that there are only three laws of association of perceptions: similarity, contiguity and causality. This implies, then, that memory, insofar as it associates different perceptions in the same subject, must necessarily depend on the aforementioned laws; that is, it will unite the different perceptions in the same I, attending to similarity and causality. (Hume rejects contiguity as an associative law linked to the idea of personal identity, since the I neither occupies space nor place) (Daros, 2009, p.53). (Daros, 2009, p.53).

According to Hume (2001), memory performs the following double function: first, it gives us the ability to manifest and know about the nature of perceptions, since it arranges them chronologically, in the right order. Secondly, it can make the numerical differences of such perceptions disappear, confusing them with the specific ones, in such a way that it not only discovers but also produces the idea of personal identity (Gutierrez, n.d.).

Gutierrez (n.d.) comments on how memory in the *Treatise on Human Nature* (2001) plays a fundamental role, linked to the association of similarity, because it allows us not only to discover and know which are the similar perceptions in different times but, above all, because it is responsible for producing the relationship of similarity between perceptions. This means that it is precisely this awareness of time in memory that allows us to establish relationships, inferences and conclusions with respect to past time (Gutierrez, n.d.).

Memory is what allows us to have a notion of time in the first place, notion of causalities and relationships with respect to the subjects, without it, according to Hume (2001), it would be impossible to remember that which constitutes us as individuals, therefore the closeness that it keeps with the concept of identity is extremely decisive in this process of "construction" (Daros, 2009, p.58). The abandonment, on the one hand, of numerical elements such as days and dates in general does not imply the oblivion of the subject. Well, according to Hume (2001), memory does not produce, but discovers the personal-identity and in this case, as we said at the beginning, it is the strength and vividness of the impressions, which will forge the memory and therefore the individual identity (Gutierrez, n.d.).

Although from the religious point of view, man's relationship with God was always a personal relationship, where both retained their permanence, and consequently, their identity and responsibility, it was in modern times that the idea of individual memory as a "problem" was promoted (Candau, 2000). If in the first centuries of Christianity the idea of the person was clarified from the theological point of view, in modernity one of the problems that takes effect is that of personal identity and the consequent responsibility for one's own acts before society (Rojas, 1998).

## 4. CONTEMPORARY AGE

## 4.1 Memory in contemporary times

The ways in which the concept of memory has been worked over time have been very varied, altering from the approaches that have been given to its analysis, to the terminology used to explain its concept. Different authors have resorted to different terms that, at times, could lead to confusion. However, for the purposes of this paper and in order to bring order to this methodological dance, we consider it necessary to start from the distinction of memory made by Maurice Halbwachs (2004), who is seen by many authors as the father of memory studies (Namer, 2004). (Namer, 2004).

Based on the perspective of the philosopher Henri Bergson, sociologist Halbwachs assumed that it is impossible for us individuals to remember outside our closest context and that a social frame of reference is necessary to guide us in remembering our common past (Halbwachs, 2004). Henri Bergson, a French Nobel Prize winning philosopher, born on October 18, 1859 in Paris, is considered, in addition to Durkheim, as one of the major influences on Halbwachs' work (Namer, 2004).

Henri Bergson, son of an English mother and a Polish exile father of Jewish origin, began to show his interest in parapsychological phenomena, introducing new perspectives in the phenomenological study of consciousness (Alberto, 2013). He published *Time and free will* (1889) where he put forward theories on the freedom of consciousness and time (Alberto, 2013). *Continuing with Matter and Memory* (1896) among others. Bergson demonstrates how memory represents the point of contact between matter and duration, thus taking perception as a central aspect (Aguilar, 2008, p.12).

Aguilar (2008) will comment on how Bergson will incorporate the perceptions of individuals to the analysis of the counterpart of their own memories, reaffirming that in spite of thinking only with a small part of our past "it is with our whole past [...] that we wish, want and act" (Bergson, 1957, p.47). Adding that "Memory is not a faculty of classifying memories in a drawer or of inscribing them in a register. There is no register, there is no drawer, [...] the piling up of the past upon the past goes on relentlessly" (Bergson, 1957, p.48). Thus Aguilar (2008) implies that the author attributes a perpetual character to memory, attributing to intuition the ability to evoke our memories.

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The continuous contact that the individual has with society makes his imaginary something inevitably affected by the collective, whether he is aware of it or not (Aguilar, 2008). For this reason, Halbwachs already distinguished between autobiographical memory and collective memory. The first term refers to the events of personal life that we remember on an individual level, because we have experienced them directly or indirectly through the media (Halbwachs, 2004). However, Collective Memory, as opposed to Autobiographical Memory, refers to residual events by virtue of which social groups establish their identity over time (Halbwachs, 2004).

For this explanation Halbwachs relied on Durkheim's theory of "collective representations" (Aguilar, 2008). According to Durkheim, (1986) collective representations were symbols or meanings owned by a social group, whether they were assumed consciously or not, which is why for some researchers an event that is no longer remembered cannot be part of the collective memory. However, for Durkheim and his followers, culture cannot be reduced to what is in people's heads (Aguilar, 2008). Collective representation does not float in the air, but is anchored to the individual consciousness and can only be conveyed through it. The sum of representations constitutes a "spiritual process proper to the community". (Aguilar, 2008)

There is a collective way of remembering past events (Halbwachs, 2004). It is for this reason that the French sociologist Halbwachs will face the task of defining this series of events in his work *The Social Frameworks of Memory* (2004). Although he was not the first to speak of a type of shared memory, it is true that he was the first to give theoretical weight to the term, generating a much more rigorous school of thought. (Namer, 2004).

After the death of Maurice Halbwachs in the Second World War, studies of memory as a sociological phenomenon only gained ground as a scientific topic in the international, cultural and literary sphere, accelerating this interest especially at the end of the 20th century. As Pierre Nora (another recognized expert in the study of memory) will say, Memory will be life and will remain in constant evolution, constantly open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation. (Nora, 1984).

In this line Nora publishes her work *The Places of Memory* (1984), which includes among other things the debate on objectivity, the ways of writing history, the return of the subject and the study of representations, these "representations" seen as the memory exposed or embodied in the collective imaginary through places (De Zan, 2008). Through the French places of memory, Nora manages to analyze the phenomenon as a decayed element in French society, how it was on the way to extinction and how the attention given to memory could only be explained by the fact that it, according to him, had disappeared (Allier, 2008). This work will be conceived as a novel opposition to the way of writing and describing memory.

The task of memory studies has been in many cases to find out the reasons why these structures of thought are so strong at the collective level, emphasizing the enduring nature of these structures and how this collectivist perspective fulfills the function of safeguarding traditions, myths and other different orders of society over time (Aguilar, 2008).

Another author who decided to venture into the study of memory and its relationship with places, is David Lowenthal in his work *Past Time, Present Time* (1985) stating that people decide to remember or forget the past according to the needs of the present and how memory seen as something collective never ceases to be a process (Lowenthal, 1985, p.210). He further argues that the construction of memory can, in symbolic terms, soften discord, creating the appearance of a seamless society, arguing that memory in the collective framework is often used to legitimize or delegitimize authorities. (Lowenthal, 1985, p.214).

Following the research profile, we find the renowned work of Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (1989). In it, the author takes the liberty of distinguishing two types of memories, on the one hand Inscribed *Memory* (that which involves monuments, texts and symbolic representations) and on the other hand Embodied *Memory* (religious rituals and activities of this type) (Connerton, 1989). This research is extremely positive for our work, since its contributions are not only positive with respect to the concept of memory itself, but also to the analysis of the concept in relation to life in society. This author decides to establish 4 specific categories through which social memories are commonly constructed and observed: ritual behaviors, narratives, objects and symbolic representations, and finally places (Connerton, 1989). Finally, places are elements taken into account, not only by Paul Connerton, but also by other authors such as Alcock (2001) and Holtorf (1998).

Going deeper into contemporary studies of memory, it is an obligation to take as a reference the contribution of the professor, philosopher and doctor of letters Paul Ricoeur, who not only makes a historical review of the development of memory studies in his work *Memory, history and forgetting* (2000), but also raises one more variable to his analysis: forgetting. A work that denotes a mastery of the concepts and methodological resources that can only be found in the absolute maturity of an author like Ricoeur (Muñoz, 2003).

His work is novel and interesting thanks to his sincere concern for memory, in all its dimensions and the need for a just memory, as well as for forgetting and forgiveness. "Memory constitutes us; it is one of the axes of our identity" (Ricoeur, 2004, p.23).

Joel Candau, anthropologist, professor at the University of Nice, specializing in social sciences, is a theoretician who joins the list of memory experts. He will serve as a fundamental support for memory studies and its influence on the consolidation of the contemporary concept of personal and national identity. His book Memory and Identity (2001) is indispensable when taking into account memory scholars in the 11th century. He defends the idea that every human being has the virtue of memory and that in fact there is no individual who can escape from it, being a natural fact, of neurobiological origin (Bernard, 2011). (Bernard, 2011).

Buñuel (quoted in Candau 2001, p.13) points out that "it is necessary to lose memory in order to realize that it is what constitutes our whole life". And most crucially, memory allows the individual to construct his or her own identity (Candau, 2001). In his book Memory and Identity, Candau, quoting Anne Muxel's words, remarks that "memory is the operator of the construction of the subject's identity" (2001. p.14).

There are also other authors who have addressed the danger of excessive memory (Todorov, 1997). In the case of Tzvetan Todorov, in his work *The Abuses of Memory* (1997) he states: "Everyone has the right to recover his past, of course, but there is no reason to demand a cult of memory for memory's sake; to sacralize memory is another way of rendering it sterile" (Todorov, 1997, p.16). (Todorov, 1997, p.16) In turn, Todorov affirms that "(...) the rediscovery of the past is indispensable" (Todorov, 1997, p.17), but this should not govern the present but rather should be used in function of better understanding the present.

Yosef Yerushalmi will be another theorist who addresses the issue of social oblivion. In addition to him, we can also take into account the work of Primo Levi and Jorge Semprún. Both expose in their works situations related to the appropriation of the past and the configuration of memory (Muñoz, 2003). With their contribution, the reader has the opportunity to question whether the established memory truly goes hand in hand with the survivors' accounts. Both Levi and Semprún take advantage of their witness status. Levi, like so many others who were saved, has the need to narrate what happened, to leave testimony of that horror and in memory of those who knew in depth the animality, the horror, that is, the "sunk", the weakest, the true witnesses (Illescas, 2009).

These authors need to go into the past to tell and try to transmit what happened (Illescas, 2009). Their stories, perhaps imperfect due to their condition of survivors, are an attempt to rescue the sunken. Called by many defenders of memory, they make very clear in their works the idea of criticism in historiography (Febvre, 1999). It is clear that for the author the commitment refers above all to his conviction that historical analysis serves society to the extent that it is affirmed in the idea of rigor, of a well-performed craft, of a complex form of work, opposed to any simplification (Moreno, 2009).

It is therefore good to know that the changes the world has undergone (especially since 1945) have had the effect of multiplying the centers of historical production. Other non-Eurocentric perceptions and interpretations have emerged. Many societies have now claimed their right to have a place in history and to contest the official version that has always been told (Todorov, 1997). The idea that there can be a single, universally accepted version of history seems now more than ever a mere illusion. Today, theoretical studies on Memory have not only focused on the need to search for a definition of Memory, but have also raised debates about the relevant perspectives for a good use of memory in the present and future (Ricoeur, 2004).

Having concluded the chapter on the historiography of the concept of memory, we can realize that this phenomenon has resulted in aporias throughout universal history. We can additionally see how the concept has become more complex over time, and that it has been a universal need for human beings to understand the complexity of this phenomenon. Whether from an individual or collective point of view, memory acts in the human being as a guiding tool.

Thus, we will be able to see the various advances that have emerged from the specialized study of memory. However, it should be noted that although we believe that we have collected a wide range of information on the subject, we also recognize that due to the limitations of the research it is impossible for us to cover all the authors of memory. That is why we recognize the

need to constantly expand our knowledge in relation to memory, which is why we recommend continuing with the analysis of the remaining authors at a later date.

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