



Affectivity in its Relation to Personal Identity

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Abstract

My aim is to propose affectivity as a criterion for personal identity. My proposal is to be taken in its weak version: affectivity as *only one* of the criteria for personal identity. I start by arguing for affectivity being a better candidate as a criterion for personal identity than thinking. Next, I focus on synchronic vs. diachronic and on ontic vs. epistemic distinctions (my proposal will concern diachronic ontic personal identity) and consider the realm of affectivity in its temporal dimension. In my argument, I rely on the genuineness of affectivity and I exploit chiefly long- or everlasting feelings (or emotions) and those which involve the feeling subject more rather than less. I conclude by stating that genuine long-lasting feelings (or emotions) are constitutive of diachronic ontic personal identity.

Keywords Personal identity · Affectivity · Feelings/emotions · Ontic identity · Diachronic identity

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Introduction

Two Criteria for Personal Identity

In the debate on personal identity - *provided that* there is anything of the kind at all¹ - two general and conflicting perspectives are suggested: either bodily identity or memory identity is adopted as a criterion.² Yet the bodily criterion is rejected because the body changes both quantitatively and qualitatively throughout the life of an individual. And memory does no better: it changes and, more importantly, happens to be inadequate. It may deform past experiences and the extent of deformation - which, to be sure, is a new experience - is unverifiable by the person whose memory is deformed otherwise than by her relying on external data. In response to that, a distinction between a veridical memory and a non-veridical memory has been introduced. For instance, it has been claimed that:

[i]n order for a specific memory to coconstitute personal identity, then, that memory is required to be veridical. (Slors, 2001: 188)

However, it helps little, because a person has no criterion for distinguishing veridical and non-veridical memory and even if this be possible, it remains that:

[e]stablishing whether or not a memory is veridical means, however, establishing whether or not the person who remembers really witnessed the remembered event. And that just means establishing whether the witness and the rememberer are identical. Thus, personal identity seems to be presupposed by veridical memory so that, on pain of vicious circularity, the latter cannot be a criterion for the former. (Slors, 2001: 188)

As it seems, instead of obtaining a criterion for personal identity we fall into a circularity. Since neither body nor memory is satisfactory as a criterion for personal identity, another criterion should be proposed.

A Proposal for a New Criterion

In what follows I want to test another criterion for personal identity. I want to see to what extent the affective domain - affectivity for short³ - could be suggested for a

¹ Note that primitivists, e.g. Fiocco (2021), reject criteria for personal identity, not personal identity itself.

² The literature is rich. For body thesis see e.g. Williams (1957), for psychological thesis see e.g. Parfit (1971). For a bibliography see Olson (2019). See also Whiting (2002: 213-218) for an annotated bibliography. To this I would add a novel by Mann (1941).

³ While it is often remarked that *feeling* is an inappropriate concept to treat affectivity, others use it interchangeably with *emotion*. See for instance Ben-Ze'ev (2001: 64 & 65): "The term "feeling" has several meanings: awareness of tactile qualities, bodily sensations, emotions, moods, awareness in general, and so forth. [...] Feelings are frequently described as emotions, and emotions are often defined by reference to feelings". And then: "Despite the importance of feelings in emotions, equating the two is incorrect since emotions have intentional components in addition to the feeling component". I prefer the former

criterion for personal identity. My idea originates from the fact that there is no such thing as a *non-veridical* feeling (or emotion). Hence feelings (or emotions) - insofar as they are ongoing - do not entail a risk of circularity. Whereas memory is a second-order experience (e.g., memory *of* or *about* a feeling, a thought, etc.), feeling is a first-order act (e.g., feeling *what* is felt). Feeling is a direct experience,⁴ while memory is superimposed on another experience of which it is a memory. An occurring feeling, regardless of its object, be it past, present, future or fictive, is always genuine. The issue is not about the world being represented in feelings or even how feelings represent the world - certainly many times they do so falsely - but about a genuinely lived experience,⁵ which means that they are veridical and, therefore, are a good candidate as a criterion for personal identity.

This is why I take into consideration only ongoing experiences, that is experiences synchronic with the personal identity under scrutiny. I exclude past feelings, i.e., feelings prior to personal identity, as irrelevant, although they are relevant to a prior personal identity, i.e., to personal identity during the portion of time in which they were being experienced.

Why Affectivity may be Considered a Better Criterion than Thinking of Personal Identity?

In what follows I review arguments which prompted me to think that affectivity rather than thinking may be a good criterion for personal identity. I find it useful to do so insofar as I am unable to refrain completely from mentioning thinking while discussing affectivity and also because I don't discuss the opposite position, i.e., that thinking may be a better criterion for personal identity than affectivity. This means that I consider affectivity a better criterion for personal identity than thinking for some reasons *only* - not absolutely.

I must acknowledge that the issue is difficult - and this is independent of the personal identity problem - partly because we hardly have a clear-cut definition of thought (or belief for that matter) and feeling (or emotion). Accordingly, any discussion in which an explicit thought/affectivity distinction is needed is complicated. I think this is also because there are few, if any at all, examples of pure-thought-without-any-affective-component-at-all and also of pure-affective-act-without-any-

since it seems to me broader and comprises, among others, psychic feelings and existential feelings. It means that I take it not in the sense of *sensation* but in the sense of *experiencing*. At all events I take *feeling* to be a metacategory for the whole of affectivity in a similar way, I suppose, as those whose preference is for *emotion* or *emotional experience* or *emotional feeling* etc.

⁴ That a feeling may have as its object another feeling doesn't falsify this claim, for in such case we deal with a *metafeeling* (or a second-order feeling).

⁵ The claim is as old as Plato (1975: 37b2-8 & 40d7-e4): "[...] whether he is rightly pleased or not, at least that he is really (*ontōs*) pleased he never loses. [...] judgement is commonly false, as well as being true (*alethes*), while pleasure is only true (*alethes*), although in these cases both remain genuine (*ontōs*) examples of judgement and pleasure [...] it was possible for someone who was at all delighted about anything in any way however fortuitous always to be genuinely delighted, although on occasion not about anything that had happened or was present, and often, even perhaps usually, about what is never going to happen [...] The same would be hold of fear, anger, and the rest, too [...]" (tr. Gosling).

component-of-thought-at-all. These two kinds of mental acts are not like chemical elements and most often they exist as blends of both.

Both thinking and affectivity are activities of a subject and a particular thought or feeling (or emotion) is her product. As such they belong to the subject or are authored by her, so to speak. However, as soon as we try to disconnect thought or feeling from the subject, a difference becomes apparent. Thoughts may be separated from their author and reproduced, quoted, paraphrased, or even appropriated, without losing anything of their content. Also, I may know someone's thought either directly or indirectly, since it may be provided to me either by a person whose thought it is *or* by another person. A prosaic proof of this being so is copyright. It is needed in order to secure an otherwise decomposable link between a thought and its author. I suppose this is so because a thought's content does not include a mark pointing to its owner. To find her we need another inquiry. The case of feeling is anything but similar. The content of a feeling (or emotion) points to its owner: when I know someone's feeling I know perforce who is its owner. Next, not only can I not know someone's feeling (or emotion) from a different person than the one whose feeling it is, but it also cannot be quoted, paraphrased or appropriated. If so, it means that feeling (or emotion) is inseparable from its author, i.e., from a subject whose feeling (or emotion) it is. A thought *t* thought by one person and a thought *t* thought by another person is the same thought. But there is no such thing as a feeling *f* felt by one person and the same feeling *f* felt by another person.⁶

Now, this is not only how things seem to be, but also how they are expected to be. If a feeling is particular and cannot be universalized, it does not matter, because what makes feeling meaningful is its subject being so-and-so towards the object of this feeling. They are not - and could or should not be - *subjectless*.⁷ By contrast a thought's content is expected to be separable and universalized, and as such may become interpersonal and, in the end, impersonal. We need it to be impersonal because we discuss and analyze the content of thought independently of whose thought it is (or what else would the blind review process be for?). The more a thought is *objective* and *subjectless*, the more it satisfies our expectation of being able to grasp the object it is about. Conversely, a feeling is not about an object but about a person's relation to an object (others' and her own feelings included). As such, feelings (or emotions) are personal, not universal. A blind review process for assessing a feeling (or an emotion) or depersonalizing or anonymizing it would be absurd.⁸ Moreover, if I see that my

⁶ See Collingwood (1958: 157f.): "[...] there is a special kind of privacy about feelings, in contrast with what may be called the publicity of thoughts. A hundred people in the street may all feel cold, but each person's feeling is private to himself. But if they all think that the thermometer reads 22° Fahrenheit, they are all thinking the same thought. The act of thinking it may or may not be an entirely private act [...]"

⁷ They are not *objectless* either. If either subject or object is non-existent, i.e., if the relation is empty, there is no feeling. Feeling's object is not a universal one as we want it to be in thought's case - but a peculiar one: it is presented in/via this person's such and such feeling (or emotion).

⁸ This is not to say that an author - and above all an eminent one - cannot represent and write about affective life and understand it. Goldie (2000: 19) reports Harold Macmillan's suggestion about how to get some idea of what emotions are like: "I suggest you read a good novel". I wonder how much it corresponds with Chesterton's (2007: 107) saying that "[a] good novel tells us the truth about its hero; but a bad novel tells us the truth about its author". I thank an anonymous reviewer for pressing me to add this qualification.

feelings are not what I would like them to be, e.g., my anger is too violent, my love is too weak, the feelings of another person, unlike her thoughts, cannot be a model for my feelings or they might be only a type-model, not a content-model (whereas when I am wrong and you are right, it suffices for me to adopt your opinion, belief or thought). Next, if one day it turns out that the *Odyssey* is Homer's (or the opposite for those who believe it is Homer's), this will change nothing to the content of the *Odyssey*, but if Paul's love for Laura were transferred to Peter and replaced Peter's love for Laura - assuming such a thing is possible - it would make all the difference to Peter and, supposedly, to Paul and Laura too. The more personal feelings (or emotions) are, the more we trust them because they tell us more about their author. Hence, since feelings (or emotions) are both *subjective* and inseparable from the *subject*, there is for them neither the requirement nor the risk of being separated from a subject they belong to. They don't stand on their own, i.e., they can't be severed from their subject or if they are, they cease to exist.⁹

If then I am tempted to consider affectivity a better criterion for personal identity than thinking, this is because thoughts *may* be the subject's and feelings *must* be the subject's. If thoughts are separable from their subject, transferable to another subject and, consequently, anonymizable, they seem to me to be a weaker¹⁰ criterion for personal identity than feelings which are neither separable nor transferable, nor anonymizable. The latter is a better candidate for a criterion for personal identity, provided that there is a kind of subjectlessness of thought and subject-involvement of affectivity.¹¹

How Much the Proposal is New?

Before I develop my argument, I need to see to what extent my proposal sets forth a new thesis.¹² Affectivity has been occasionally used as a criterion in the analysis of personal identity, but either implicitly or indirectly. What I mean is that either the category of feeling (or emotion) is used when personal identity is discussed, but without an explicit claim about the relation between personal identity and feeling (or

⁹ As put picturesquely by Strawson (2017: 167), “if *per impossibile* there could be pain-experience without a subject of experience, mere experience without an experienter [...] then there'd be no point in stopping it, because no one would be suffering”.

¹⁰ *Weaker* means here two things: (1) among thoughts there are thoughts - say general, universal thoughts - which are not a criterion for personal identity at all, (2) in cases in which thoughts are a criterion for personal identity - say one's long-lasting research programme genuinely lived - there is a longer way to prove that it is a criterion for personal identity because first it must be proved that it is of a subject whose personal identity is in question.

¹¹ De Sousa (1987: 324) has no answer as to “whether the more spontaneous or the more reflective response best represents the authentic self,” although he observes (329) that “[b]y what I feel, I can potentially distinguish myself most acutely from others,” and then adds: “my emotions perpetually risk the inauthenticity consequent on their engulfment by imitation or ideology”.

¹² None of the entries of the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* I checked - i.e., *Emotion* by Scarantino & de Sousa (2018), *Personal Identity* by Olson (2019), and *Identity over Time* by Gallois (2016) - mentions feeling (or emotion) as crucial to personal identity or at least their relation. However, Scarantino and de Sousa (2018) begin their entry thus: “[n]o aspect of our mental life is more important to the quality and meaning of our existence than emotions. They are what make life worth living and sometimes ending”.

emotion) or the category of experience (or mood) is introduced but is not explicit whether, and if so to what extent, this category comprises feeling (or emotion).¹³ In either case it is hard to say how much affectivity qua affectivity is intended and if it matters for personal identity at all. Therefore, since I haven't met my proposal in the form I am going to develop it in this paper, let my overview be interpretatively more charitable insofar as I am going to make reference to a selection of authors whenever their works contain a similitude to my thesis.

It is conventional to start with Locke when discussing personal identity, especially because he is considered to be the first to introduce psychological continuity as a criterion for personal identity.¹⁴ Locke makes feelings a necessary constituent of psychological continuity even if he is not explicit about them being a criterion for personal identity. Instead, he considers them in a Cartesian-like way to be the content of consciousness.¹⁵

Most relevant to the point I am making is, it seems to me, Rosenthal's (1983: 180) claim that emotions, thoughts and desires are "highly characteristic of a person's individuality," but thoughts and desires in order to be so "must be, to a very high degree, emotionally charged". He insists that emotions not only make a person distinct but also unites her and also that (1983: 181) "emotions and dispositions to have emotions reflect a long-term continuity that is central to the unity of the self".

My proposal is also close in some sense, as I see it, to Whiting's insofar as she makes the ongoing and lasting concern crucial to personal identity (see Whiting, 1986: 552). She emphasizes the analogy between friendship - which I take to be a long-lasting, if not everlasting, feeling (see 3.1. below) - and psychological continuity (see Whiting, 1986: 557 & 571), and, last not least, claims that "particular affections and personal projects are components of the psychological continuity which - assuming a psychological criterion - constitutes personal identity" (Whiting, 1986: 579). But again, there is no separate and explicit claim about feelings (or emotions) as a criterion for personal identity.

In a more recent collection of papers on personal identity (Gasser & Stefan, 2012), Nida-Rümelin, 2012: 168) speaks about a person's being as consisting in "living that person's life [...] experienc[ing] the world from that person's perspective [...] hav[ing] that person's body, and [...] enjoy[ing] that person's pleasures". She considers a person to be the very subject of experience, that is, the subject that exists rather than does not exist, especially because, for that particular subject, it is fundamentally

¹³ For instance Williams (1957: 252). Only in the last paragraph of the paper does he refer to moods, but it is not obvious if affectivity matters in the case of Miss Beauchamps which Williams takes into consideration.

¹⁴ One might mention here the Stoics' fourfold criterion for identity. See Sedley (1982).

¹⁵ See Locke (1975, *Essay* II, XXVII: 17): "*Self* is that conscious thinking thing ... which is sensible, or conscious of Pleasure and Pain, capable of Happiness or Misery, and so is concern'd for it *self*, as far as that consciousness extends". And also *Essay* IV, IX, 3: "For nothing can be more evident to us, than our own *Existence*. *I think, I reason, I feel Pleasure and pain*; Can any of these be more evident to me, than my own *Existence*? If I doubt of all other Things, that very doubt makes me perceive my own *Existence*, and will not suffer me to doubt of that. For if I know *I feel Pain*, it is evident, I have as certain a Perception of my own *Existence*, as of the *Existence* of the pain I feel: Or If I know *I doubt*, I have as certain a Perception of the *Existence* of the thing doubting, as of that Thought, which I call *doubt*. [...] In every Act of Sensation, Reasoning, or Thinking, we are conscious to our selves of our own Being [...]"

different whether she exists or not and she insists that “[t]he difference lies in nothing but *who* is experiencing that life” (2012: 173). However, no direct reference to affectivity, feelings or emotions is made. Still in the same volume Lowe (2012: 150) takes any psychological account of personal identity to be circular: if personal identity is based on experiences and experiences are properties of a person, then the criterion is circular because “we cannot *both* individuate persons in terms of their experiences [...] *and* individuate personal experiences in terms of the persons having them”.¹⁶

Let it then be concluded that - provided that the category of experience may charitably comprehend affectivity/feeling - all the authors quoted above consider, but only vaguely, affectivity/feelings as contributing to personal identity. Since they do so implicitly and with no special focus on affectivity/feelings, nothing specific about the relation between personal identity and affectivity can be inferred from their statements. This provides, I think, an additional reason for testing my proposal.

A Proviso (A Strong vs. a Weak Thesis)

The proposal that affectivity is a criterion for personal identity may obtain two forms. A strong one is that affectivity is the *only* criterion for personal identity and the weak one that affectivity is *only one of* the criteria for personal identity. Since the strong thesis would necessitate ruling out other possible criteria (such as thoughts, for example), I prefer to argue here for the weak version, leaving a discussion of the strong one for the future (which will not make sense if the weak one turns out, either here or elsewhere, to be false).

It should be noted that the thesis is not about personal identity *caused by* affectivity but about personal identity *constituted*, either exclusively (in a strong version) or among others (in a weak version), *by* affectivity, that is about personal identity being affectivity (a strong thesis) or affectivity being an inherent and irreducible part of personal identity (a weak thesis). Alternatively, it can be said that personal identity and affectivity go hand in hand. To paraphrase James Mill:

The phenomenon of Self and that of Affectivity [instead of Mill’s Memory] are merely two sides of the same fact, or two different modes of viewing the same fact. (Mill, 1869: 174)¹⁷

¹⁶ Slors (2001: 206) mentions several times “beliefs and thoughts [...] Thoughts, desires, and beliefs [...] thoughts, beliefs, and desires [...]” etc., but not feelings, emotions or affectivity. All the opposite is claimed by Malvestiti (2017: 7 & 16): “Actually, she being the person whose identity is in question, she does have privileged access to her inner self and if she feels she is still the same person, she is more right in saying that that[sic] we are in negating it. [...] We do not need to make a case to justify our identity, for it is already justified by the way we feel”. I also need to mention Yang (2013), which, however, concerns memory affecting past emotions and emotions deriving from the past as affecting one’s whole being and one’s future rather than one’s ongoing emotions.

¹⁷ According to Hamilton (2006: 169) in a similar case we deal with “[t]he benign circularity” since what is in question is what “constitute[s]” personal identity and not what is “merely furnishing evidence” for it. It seems that this kind of benign circularity goes back as far as to Aristotle. On his view character is formed, among other things, by emotions, while emotions form character. See Aristotle (2004: 1114a7-9): “[...] in each sphere people’s activities [*energeiai*] give them the corresponding character. This is clear

Preliminary Distinctions

Now, before embarking upon my argument I need to make two kinds of conceptual clarification, first, because personal identity is understood in several ways, and next, because affectivity constitutes a large and intricate realm.

Four Facets of Personal Identity

First, personal identity. We encounter the terms *synchronic* and *diachronic* and also *epistemic* and *ontic personal identity*. The former two refer to two aspects of personal identity, whereas the latter two concern two perspectives of how it can be considered.

Synchronic identity is about what makes the person she is the person she is at this very moment. Diachronic identity pertains to what makes a person at time t_2 remain the same person she was at time t_1 .

The core meaning of personal identity is ontic. It is about what it is *to be* identical to oneself. However, there is another sense built upon the ontic one, which is about *knowing* that a person is the person she is. The distinction stems from the fact that typically we are not perfect cognizers. In an ideal world, an ideal observer would have no trouble with a correct identification. But in the real world, there may be, for instance, two discrete persons not yet recognized as such¹⁸ because the difference between them consists in some subtle feature which is hardly perceptible and consequently they are not recognized as different from one another. Since they are two, they are distinguished or recognized as two only when they are together but without knowing which one is which. Only they know the difference between themselves: one knows who she is (1st person) insofar as she is, even if only minimally, “an object of acquaintance to herself” (Grice, 1941: 335) and who the other (not she, hence the 2nd person). They are *ontically* distinct but *epistemically* we do not grasp the difference between them because of their too great resemblance and/or of our insufficient cognitive capacity. Speaking *ontically*, a person’s being herself does not depend on whether she is recognized as herself or not. Suppose a highly complex feature f constitutes the core of Peter’s personal identity and he is aware of it. He remains still keen on it even if he realizes that another person, say, Paul, possesses the same highly complex feature f . In this case, f makes Peter and Paul the persons they are, yet they are hardly identifiable by virtue of this essential feature of theirs.¹⁹

from the case of people training for any competition or action, since they practise the relevant activity continually” (tr. Crisp).

¹⁸ Curiously, the reverse is also possible (e.g., Stevenson, 1886).

¹⁹ There is also an issue of self-identification, i.e., of how and whether she identifies herself correctly. It could be that a person doesn’t recognize herself as such (i.e., doesn’t know herself even to a minimal extent, doesn’t identify herself with her experiences or even rejects them in a similar way as she who doesn’t accept her body), although as long as she is any kind of person she is that person. Such a situation would involve her epistemic personal identity only, leaving, paradoxically, her ontic personal identity intact.

Four Meanings of Personal Identity

If the above two twofold distinctions are accurate, we arrive at four senses of personal identity: (i) synchronic epistemic, (ii) diachronic epistemic, (iii) synchronic ontic, and (iv) diachronic ontic. If this is correct, it would complicate the whole issue tremendously because being recognized as different could be not a necessary mark of personal identity, and any attempt at identifying a person by drawing on her being different would fail. For instance, it can be that two persons are different even if they are not recognized as such. But also being recognized as different could be not a sufficient mark of personal identity either since the same person could be recognized as different at time t_1 and t_2 . In short, what constitutes an identity and what makes it recognizable, unless to an ideal recognizer, may not coincide and if they do not do so, being recognizable depends on a recognizer's epistemic specificity. If, for example, two recognizers each had a dissimilar epistemic specificity, an identity would need to have traits by which it would be recognized as such by both of them, if three - by three, etc.

If this is so, it means that epistemic identity, either synchronic or diachronic, is scarcely traceable on a universal level and that the same is valid when we consider feelings (or emotions) as a possible criterion for epistemic identity. An identity is recognized not universally but by a recognizer. To recognize an identity on account of feelings (or emotions), they have to be conspicuous. But not all kinds of feelings are equally conspicuous. Besides the observer's epistemic competence. There is an even more puzzling problem. If affectivity, essential to personal identity, is inner or very deep indeed, it manifests itself to an outer observer either to the lowest degree or not at all. My preferred example for that would be Kierkegaard's Abraham's anxiety related to his experience during more than three days of journey, for:

Abraham remains silent - but he *cannot* speak. Therein lies the distress and anguish. [...] Abraham *cannot* speak, because he cannot say that which would explain everything (that is, so it is understandable) [...] the distress and anxiety in the paradox were due in particular to the silence: Abraham cannot speak. (Kierkegaard, 1983: 113–118)

If this is correct, it means that the most manifest feelings (or emotions), say fear and anger, are typically and most easily detectable and therefore are not what best reveals personal identity because they are typically, we are told, short-lived. At the most, they are evidence of synchronic ontic personal identity or a short-lasting diachronic personal identity, if they are correctly identified.

Because of these issues, in the remainder of the paper, I shall limit myself to diachronic ontic personal identity. It is not contingent on the observer's parameters and points to the very core of personal identity, regardless of the external conditions allowing or producing its manifestation or detection. Since it lies outside the empirical domain, it requires a purely conceptual investigation, which, no doubt here, should be as clear as possible. Yet, since synchronic ontic personal identity is weaker than diachronic ontic personal identity, given that any feeling (or emotion) constitut-

ing the latter also constitutes the former and not the other way round, I shall focus on the latter only.

Now, since the issue at stake is a diachronic ontic personal identity, the question of the feeling's duration comes to the fore. It seems necessary that diachronic ontic personal identity constituted by a feeling (or affectivity) endures no longer and no shorter than the feeling (or affectivity) which constitutes it.

The Realm of Affectivity in View of its Duration

It is well known that the realm of affectivity is intricate. Apart from various taxonomies of feelings (or emotions), which are, in my view, attempts to deal with the complexity of affectivity, there are philosophers who not only were explicit about the intricacy of the affective realm but also treated it as stratified (or layered). Such were the theories of Max Scheler and Edith Stein, and, also of Nicolai Hartmann. While Stein²⁰ and Hartmann²¹ proposed a threefold model, Max Scheler offered a model of affectivity stratified in “four well-delineated levels of feeling” (Scheler, 1973: 332). In his view, “feelings are not only of different qualities but also of different levels of *depth*” (Scheler, 1973: 331).²² It's a pity that a multilevelled approach to affectivity got little traction and is rarely, if at all, applied in current research. The correlation between depth and duration is not linear and short-lasting but deep feeling is possible, while the reverse maybe much less so. This issue cannot be discussed here. But since what matters here is the duration of feelings, a word about affectivity's intricacy in precisely this respect is in order. Before, let me, however, comment briefly on the objection that feelings (or emotions) are inconstant and variable.

Continuity vs. Fleetingness

Affectivity is often considered as fleeting or even as an example of fleetingness par excellence.²³ If so, suggesting that affectivity be a criterion for personal identity is absurd. It was Hume who is reported to have used this feature for famously ruling

²⁰ See Stein (1989). Szanto and Moran (2020) give a different interpretation: “[p]artly drawing on Scheler, Stein distinguishes five different strata of affectivity”.

²¹ See Hartmann (1931) and Hartmann (1965).

²² For a critical analysis of Scheler's model, correlation depth/duration included, see Zaborowski (2010-2011).

²³ In Plato's *Symposium* (1901b, 207d6-208a7) there is an objection against anything unchanging in the human being (ὁ αὐτὸς [scil. ἄνθρωπος]). Plato starts by enumerating body and bodily elements (καὶ κατὰ τὰς τρίχας καὶ σάρκα καὶ ὀστά καὶ αἷμα καὶ σύμπαν τὸ σῶμα), then follow mental habits, dispositions, opinions and feelings (κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν οἱ τρόποι, τὰ ἦθη, δόξαι, ἐπιθυμίας, ἡδοναί, λῦπαι, φόβοι, τούτων ἕκαστα οὐδέποτε τὰ αὐτὰ πάρεστιν ἐκάστω) to end with - as Plato says - the most surprising case of knowledge (πολὺ δὲ τούτων ἀποπώτερον ἔτι, ὅτι καὶ αἱ ἐπιστήμαι [...]) καὶ οὐδέποτε οἱ αὐτοὶ ἔσμεν οὐδὲ κατὰ τὰς ἐπιστήμας). This seems to be a massive attack on any stability in human both body and mind. One could wonder how to understand it, since in the *Phaedrus* (e.g. Plato, 1901a, 248a1-c8) - usually accepted as later than the *Symposium* - we are told about eternal souls whose both celestial and terrestrial fate depends on their knowledge of the ideas. See also Plato (1900, 154a7-8): ὅτι οὐδὲ σοὶ αὐτῶ ταῦτὸν διὰ τὸ μηδέποτε ὁμοίως αὐτὸν σεαυτῷ ἔχειν; (tr. Fowler (in Plato, 1921): “nothing appears the same even to you, because you yourself are never exactly the same?”). I am unable to develop this point here.

out not only affectivity as a possible constituent of personal identity but any idea of identity altogether. He said,

there is no impression constant and invariable (Hume, 1978: 251),

and, more patently:

It cannot, therefore, be from any of these impressions [i.e., pain and pleasure, grief and joy, passions and sensations], or from any other, that the idea of self is deriv'd; and consequently there is no such idea. (Hume, 1978: 252).

For Hume, if we speak about such a thing as identity, this is only because we replace resemblance with identity (see Hume, 1978: 254). He concluded that personal identity “is only a fictitious one” (Hume, 1978: 259).

This invites a remark.²⁴ If Hume’s claim that “there is no impression constant and invariable” implies that all impressions are variable, this is a claim about their changing character and not a denial of their duration. If indeed there were no constant and invariable impressions at all, however short they could be, that is if they did not last even the slightest fraction of a second and were subject to Heraclitean flux,²⁵ they would be punctual.²⁶ But then the impressions Hume named, i.e., pain, pleasure, grief, joy, and passions, would be punctual too. This is strange insofar as we take one grief to be one and not a series of what would form it and, more importantly, some of our griefs are perceived as longer than others. Given that Hume not only says that “tis impossible for our perceptions to succeed each other with the same rapidity” (Hume, 1978: 35) and that “perceptions succeed each other with greater or less rapidity,” but also speaks about “the same duration [as] appear[ing] longer or shorter to his imagination” (Hume, 1978: 35), it is better to interpret his claim as one about a *certain* duration of impressions (see also Hume (1978: 252) and Hume (1978: 633)).²⁷ Second, if there is an impression of “resemblance, contiguity and causation” (Hume, 1978: 255), there must be a constant and invariable observer who not only notices them and then replaces them with identity but who also becomes aware of this state of affairs, i.e., that “there is no impression constant and invariable”.²⁸

²⁴ For a systematic rebuttal of the standard reading of Hume see Strawson (2017: 253–273, e.g., 260: “Hume, then, never denies the existence of the, or a, self or subject of experience, contrary to what some have suggested”). See also Olson (2007: 125–26 & 133).

²⁵ Hume (1978: 252) speaks about “perpetual flux and movement”.

²⁶ How short they should last to be *only and no longer than* punctual is a tricky question. I have no answer to it.

²⁷ Moreover, see Hume (1902: 88): “[...] we know, in general, that the characters of men are, to a certain degree, inconstant and irregular. This is, in a manner, the constant character of human nature [...] a continued course of caprice and inconstancy. The internal principles and motives may operate in a uniform manner, notwithstanding these seeming irregularities; in the same manner as the winds, rain, clouds, and other variations of the weather are supposed to be governed by steady principles [...]”.

²⁸ Compare Heraclitus’ (1948) the same river: “Those who step into the same river have different waters flowing ever upon them” (fr. DK 22B12, tr. Freeman). Here the river is the same and *those who step* obviously must last at least the time they are stepping into the river if we are to speak properly about their stepping into the river.

A Side Note on Dispositionality

Here a side note is helpful. It is often argued that affectivity has no other duration than a brief one and it exists only as a kind of disposition with episodes in which it is, so to speak, active (or activated).²⁹ For instance love, we are told, is such a disposition. It is not a permanent feeling but a state in which acts of love become manifest when it is felt (or which is felt when acts of love manifest).

It is true that feelings (or a particular feeling or emotion) are not maintained in the centre of awareness all the time. This would be impossible. There are more regular interruptions of awareness in sleep and frequent and irregular when one is busy with various tasks. In this sense, feeling is certainly not felt or sensed permanently. But it does not mean that such feeling is interrupted in which case it would be more appropriate to speak not about a feeling of, say love, but about several episodes of different love - per day, week, month, or year.³⁰ If that were the case, it would be curious to know how every successive episode of actively experiencing love is linked with a previous one. But think about knowledge or beliefs. They cannot be maintained in the centre of awareness incessantly either. A schoolgirl after literature class moves to a math class and then goes home. But the next day, after such interruption, she resumes and continues her classes, both of literature and of math, without much trouble and her knowledge increases. Only if the interruption is too long - and what is too long varies from case to case - does a problem of maintaining continuity appear indeed. The same is the case for affectivity.³¹ Hence, what is discontinued, or patchy, or

²⁹ This is not a universal view. See Strigo and Craig (2017: 104): “From an evolutionary perspective, emotions are not simply episodic; rather they are continuously ongoing, and all of our behaviors are emotional behaviors, regardless of whether they occur with or without subjectively experienced feelings [...]”. See also Whiting (2017) & Zaborowski (2020: 215-18) and, first of all, Aristotle’s “loving is similar to doing while being loved to being affected” (Aristotle, 1894: 1168a19-20): ἡ μὲν φίλησις ποιήσει ἔουκεν, τὸ φιλεῖσθαι δὲ τῷ πάσχειν).

³⁰ See Proust (2014a): “For what we suppose to be our love, our jealousy are, neither of them, single, continuous and individual passions. They are composed of an infinity of successive loves, of different jealousies, each of which is ephemeral, although by their uninterrupted multitude they give us the impression of continuity, the illusion of unity. The life of Swann’s love, the fidelity of his jealousy, were formed out of death, of infidelity, of innumerable desires, innumerable doubts, all of which had Odette for their object. If he had remained for any length of time without seeing her, those that died would not have been replaced by others. But the presence of Odette continued to sow in Swann’s heart alternate seeds of love and suspicion”. [= Proust (1999a: 297): “Car ce que nous croyons notre amour, notre jalousie, n’est pas une même passion continue, indivisible. Ils se composent d’une infinité d’amours successifs, de jalousies différentes et qui sont éphémères, mais par leur multitude ininterrompue donnent l’impression de la continuité, l’illusion de l’unité. La vie de l’amour de Swann, la fidélité de sa jalousie, étaient faites de la mort, de l’infidélité, d’innombrables désirs, d’innombrables doutes, qui avaient tous Odette pour objet. S’il était resté longtemps sans la voir, ceux qui mouraient n’auraient pas été remplacés par d’autres. Mais la présence d’Odette continuait d’ensemencer le cœur de Swann de tendresse et de soupçons alternés.”] Such an option has been more recently suggested by Ledwig (2009: 55): “an accumulation of many short-lived episodes of love”. For more on stage view see Olson (2007: 125-128).

³¹ See Proust (2014b): “For I felt quite sure that if I could place some interval between my thoughts of Albertine, or if, on the other hand, I had allowed too long an interval to elapse, I should cease to love her; a clean cut would have made me unconcerned about her [...] A period of any length spent without thinking of her would have broken in my memory the continuity which is the very principle of life, which however may be resumed after a certain interval of time”. [= Proust (1999b: 2004): “Car je sentais bien que, si je pouvais entre mes pensées pour Albertine mettre quelque intervalle, si j’en avais mis trop je ne l’aurais

gappy, so to speak, is not the affective state itself or knowledge itself but their being in the centre of awareness, which is not directed at them all the time continuously.

Short(er)- vs. Long(er)-Lasting Feelings

Once we have acknowledged the fact that feelings may last however shortly, we are in a position to accept also shorter and longer sensations, pains, pleasures, grief, and joy, and so on. And this is where the crux lies. For, if the difference between extremely short on the one hand and a bit longer impressions, feelings, and emotions on the other is a difference of quantity, all impressions are similar in essence. If, however, it is a matter of quality, we are faced with various types of affectivity duration. One is of sensations, impressions, feelings, and emotions which are short or very short and which it is hard to prolong, and the other kind which are longer and which it is hard or impossible to shorten. For instance, a feeling of joy upon the arrival in a favorite place - which is not to be confused with the joy of being there - is hardly prolongable above a certain time, while a sadness resulting from bad news - which is not to be confused with a sadness resulting from learning it - is hard to shorten below a certain time. Since the difference in the duration is not accidental, these are two qualitatively different kinds of affectivity duration.

Now the question is: how long a feeling (or emotion) may last?³² Frankly, I am unable to answer it. But let me give an example. At the beginning of his literary project Marcel Proust had titled his work *Intermittencies of the Heart*. This is what his work is often meant to be: to provide us with images and analyses of irregularities of impressions, passions, emotions or whatever one likes to call affective phenomena. Proust's ambition and aim were to establish or reconstruct general psychological laws and, especially, laws pertaining to affectivity and indeed he set forward several laws of affectivity.³³ Yet in the same work Proust insisted on another kind of affective phenomenon, which is durable and, thereby, crucial to the formation of a personality - in this case, of his own personality as a writer. Proust's desire to become a writer and his feelings (or emotions) related to his vocation lasted for several years. And this is where Proust's ontic diachronic personal identity lies.³⁴

plus aimée; elle me fût par cette coupure devenue indifférente [...] Trop de temps passé sans penser à elle eût rompu dans mon souvenir la continuité qui est principe même de la vie, qui pourtant peut se ressaisir après un certain intervalle de temps".] See also Proust (2014c): "[...] if love is not only for a Gilberte, what gives us so much pain is not that it is also the love of an Albertine but because it is a more durable part of our soul than the various selves which successively die in us [...]" [= Proust (1999c: 2286): "[...] si notre amour n'est pas seulement d'une Gilberte (ce qui nous fait souffrir), ce n'est pas parce qu'il est aussi l'amour d'une Albertine, mais parce qu'il est une portion de notre âme, plus durable que les moi divers qui meurent successivement en nous [...]"].

³² The question would concern *both* its maximal *and* its minimal duration, although it is the former that matters for diachronic ontic personal identity. The latter is of importance for synchronic ontic personal identity.

³³ To quote just one: "a certain moral delicacy which prevents one from expressing the depth of sentiments which are natural to us" (Proust, 2014c) [= Proust (1999c: 2165): "une espèce de délicatesse morale qui empêche d'exprimer les sentiments trop profonds et qu'on trouve tout naturels"].

³⁴ For instance Proust (2014c): "[...] a recurrent and permanent characteristic. It is the feeling for the general in the potential writer, which selects material suitable to a work of art because of its generality"

Everlasting Feelings

The best candidate for a criterion for diachronic ontic personal identity would be everlasting³⁵ feelings (or emotions). Certainly many more will disapprove of the possibility of everlasting feelings than a possibility of long-lasting feelings.³⁶ However, at this juncture I do not claim that there are such feelings. If they exist, they may be extremely rare or extremely difficult to prove. Despite that I do not see a reason for ruling them out a priori.

Since my analysis is conceptual let me put it this way: if there are everlasting feelings (or emotions), they are constituents of diachronic ontic personal identity par excellence. Not all feelings (or emotions) are constitutive of diachronic ontic personal identity to the same extent since this varies according to their duration. To which the following might be added: if diachronic ontic personal identity is constituted by affectivity, the time span of the latter equates to those feelings (or emotions) which last the longest. If a person experiences one longer affective episode when young and another, clearly separated from the first, when old, she would have two clearly defined segments of diachronic ontic personal identity. A relation between the two segments of personal identity would be analogous to a relation between the two episodes.

Now, assuming that there is hardly such a thing as a pure affective act without any component of thought at all (see 1.3. above), and this applies even more to long-standing feelings (or emotions), it should be noted that the examples I have in mind - Proust's ambition, mature human love and friendship to mention just these three - are more than just feelings (or emotions). They are complex phenomena as they involve cognition, intention and memory. These categories, however, cannot be discussed here, nor can their mutual relationship (see Malo, 2010, especially ch. 5: *Il perfezionamento dell'identità: la personalità*).

Main Argument for the Proposal

That affectivity, especially long- and everlasting affectivity, constitutes - as one of its components (on a weak thesis version) - diachronic ontic personal identity is what remains to be shown. Here's why I think it could be so.

[= Proust (1999c: 2288): "quelque chose de renouvelable, de durable; c'est le sentiment du général qui dans l'écrivain futur choisit lui-même ce qui est général et pourra entrer dans l'œuvre d'art"].

³⁵ *Everlasting* is not to be taken literally, i.e., as *eternal* (this meaning is exclusive to Plato's soul which is said - but only in the *Phaedrus* (Plato, 1901a: 246a1) - to be ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἀγέννητόν τε καὶ ἀθάνατον ("necessarily uncreated and immortal"). I intend it to mean a *human life* of a person whose personal identity is meant. This does not have to be coextensive with her lifetime, for one may argue that personal identity starts later than birth and in some cases ends before death.

³⁶ See Collingwood (1958: 159): "What we feel is certainly limited in its existence to the here and now in which we feel it. The experience of feeling is a perpetual flux in which nothing remains the same, and what we take for permanence or recurrence is not a sameness of feeling at different times but only a greater or less degree of resemblance between different feelings. [...] If we compare the flux of feeling to the flow of a river, thought has at least the relative solidity and permanence of the soil and rocks that make its channel".

Feelings (or emotions) are criticized in various ways for being subjective.³⁷ Now this feature of theirs turns out to be beneficial. For, since they cannot be detached from a person whose feelings they are,³⁸ they are not transferable, anonymizable or replicable. And if a subject of feelings (or emotions) cannot be removed from their description, it means that they are a mark of a person whose feelings (or emotions) they are.³⁹

If so, the more subjective they are, the stronger the mark of a person they constitute. Here I take degrees of subjectivity to be a way of speaking about what is typically - but metaphorically - referred to as depth of feelings (or emotions).⁴⁰ Although it is difficult to avoid this metaphor, one manner of doing so would be to reword it as a degree of the subject's involvement. For instance, existential feelings involve a person to a larger extent - that is they are deeper as said in common parlance - than psychic feelings. If so, the former would be a stronger mark of diachronic ontic personal identity than the latter (e.g., in Scheler (1973)).

However, this is where a word on what is a minimal involvement, if it exists at all, that is on *ungenuine* feelings (or emotions) is in order. The issue of genuineness of affectivity comes out because I don't want to deny that there are such things as *insincere* or *faked* feelings (or emotions), not to speak about an ordinary misnaming. When an actress simulates a character's feeling, her feeling is not genuine but faked. When a man expresses condolence to his colleague, while, in fact, he is glad that he experiences the pain of loss, his sympathy is insincere. In both cases, it would be more appropriate to speak about insincere or faked expression of a feeling (or an emotion) that does not exist. More complex is the case of an introjected feeling (or emotion). Hegel's master/slave dialectic, emotional contagion, transgenerational trauma, Stockholm syndrome, etc. are difficult to interpret precisely because they involve one's identification with another (parent, aggressor, other). Here I must leave it aside suggesting only that it may be that they evidence how much affectivity is important to personal identity. Certainly, they must be introjected and adopted genuinely, even if not deliberately, if they are to be constitutive of personal identity. Thus a long-lasting pretence or mask - especially if genuinely adopted - becomes with time a constituent of personal identity.

The above cases are not genuine feelings or feelings at all or in the proper sense and as such are beyond the scope of my argument. Consequently, I refer only to genu-

³⁷ For this and other characteristics of emotions see Ben-Ze'ev (2001: especially 32-41). However, as he underlines, the characterization he sketches there refers to "the typical intense emotions".

³⁸ Just as much as, as expressed by Frege (1956: 299), "[a]n experience is impossible without an experience". However, one may prefer Russell's position, as it was put by Olson (2007: 182): "Strictly speaking, then, there are many experiences, but no beings that have them".

³⁹ Compare Strawson's "no more be a subject without an experience" in: Strawson (2017: 7 & 172): "[...] the *thin* conception of the subject of experience according to which a *subject of experience exists only when there is experience going on* - experience of which it is the subject. [...] there can no more be a subject without an experience than there can be a surface without extension". Note the *going on* qualification. See also Strawson (2017: 254): "it's necessarily true that there's a subject of experience if there is experience".

⁴⁰ It is curious that this metaphor has not yet been explicated analytically and is used by and large in philosophy, both analytical and continental, as well as in the exact (sic.) sciences. I take depth - or what it stands for - to be a category very much different from intensity.

inely lived (or experienced) feelings (or emotions) - or genuine feelings (or emotions) for short - that is feelings of which the existence is incontestable. My argument is based on genuine feelings (or emotions) and is two-part.

Genuineness of Affectivity

If feelings (or emotions) are genuinely experienced,⁴¹ they are the experiences of a person who experiences them. The longer they are experienced, the longer they constitute her and, in a similar vein, the more they involve her, the more solidly they constitute her. Hence if we take, as an example, a perfect (*teleia*) or true (*hōs alethōs*) friendship, as understood by Aristotle (in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII & IX), the link between experience and diachronic ontic personal identity is strong and essential. A genuine friendship is stable (*monimos eulogōs*) and with respect to time, it is perfect (*kata ton chronon teleia*). I claim that a genuine friendship makes a person the person she is, and because she is the person she is, she experiences friendship in the way it is experienced by a person such as the one she is.

Now, I don't want to deny that true friendship is rare⁴² or that it is a rather singular experience since it is reciprocal (*antiphilēsis*), it comprises both a feeling of loving and a feeling of being loved and consists in sharing joy and pleasure (*sunchairein, sunēdesthai*) as well as sorrow and grief (*sunalgein, sunachthesthai*).⁴³ Moreover, friendship is *more than* just a feeling (or an emotion or sentiment): sometimes it is identified as an attitude or relationship, insofar as it includes cognition, intention, choice, memory, and so on. But this, interestingly, makes opting for a weak thesis even better grounded: in fact, if affectivity is a criterion for diachronic ontic personal identity, it is so in its more or most durable variant, in which case it is necessarily in close - maybe insoluble indeed - association with other mental acts. If then the adage that *never has there been a friend who stops being a friend* is correct, and we accept friendship as everlasting,⁴⁴ we have got an example of a strong criterion for diachronic ontic personal identity which is affective to a significant extent.

If therefore affectivity is constitutive of a person's being such as she is - and it seems to be insofar as affectivity is undetachable from the person whose affectivity it is - this means that if there is a feeling, there is a person whose feeling it is, and her feeling is such as is the feeling of that person. Thus, whenever there is an affectivity, there is a mark of the ontic personal identity of the person whose affectivity that affectivity is and each time ontic personal identity is constituted by affectivity (and not by any other mental act), there exists the affectivity of that person. If this is

⁴¹ See de Sousa (1987: 156) on “no such thing as hypothetically experiencing it [i.e., emotion]”.

⁴² Or even impossible, according to some, including Proust (2014c): “[...] friends being friends only in the sense of a sweet madness which overcomes us in life” [= Proust (1999c: 2269): “les amis n’étant des amis que dans cette douce folie que nous avons au cours de la vie”].

⁴³ Also in Xenophon (1921: 8, 18, 4-5).

⁴⁴ This is not to say that everlasting friendship is static, fixed or rigid. It has certainly its own dynamic as any mental experience does. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for pressing me to make this clarification.

correct, affectivity is a mark of diachronic ontic personal identity and the longer the affectivity continues, the longer the diachronic ontic personal identity lasts.

A Reduction

If personal identity is what a person is, it means that it must be what she cannot get rid of. I therefore suggest testing ontic personal identity by way of divesting a person of what is not essential to her and thus arriving at her core, i.e., at what constitutes her ontic personal identity with no harm or if harmed, harmed to only an insignificant degree. Proceeding by this kind of reduction is again a conceptual rather than an empirical task. If we step too far and divest her of her essential element, this will amount to destroying her ontic personal identity altogether. In fact, this is but another side, the reverse one, of the genuineness of affectivity. Anything which is genuine comes from or refers to the core of a person: the more away from the core the less genuine it is.

Accordingly, to take again the example of friendship, if it makes a person who she is the person she is and now we take friendship away from her, she *is* no longer the person she *was* before the friendship has been taken away from her. This is all the more so if friendship or another feeling (or emotion), say despair, is (i) longer- rather than shorter-lasting and/or (ii) an experience involving the subject to a greater extent rather than involving the subject to a lesser extent.

Now, what is it that a person cannot get rid of without jeopardizing her diachronic ontic personal identity, that is her being who she is? Certainly, her thinking may be such a thing. A way of thinking and the content of one's thoughts may build one's ontic identity. However, not every thought that is thought by a person is constitutive of her ontic personal identity. Those that are borrowed, reproduced, quoted or paraphrased do not do it, or if they do, they do it unoriginally and then build an unoriginal personal identity.⁴⁵ Hence, only unique, authentic and subject-involving thoughts (say Archimedes' eureka) are constitutive of diachronic ontic personal identity and - as suggested for feelings (or emotions) - the longer they last and the more the subject gets involved in them, the longer and more solid the diachronic ontic personal identity they construct. The case of feelings is similar but stronger and, consequently, easier to be accepted as a criterion for ontic personal identity than is the case of thoughts. Any feeling (or emotion) is genuinely lived, hence we do not need to check whether it does indeed belong to the subject and whether it is authentic and subject-involving, as is in the case of thought. Imagine the following: Peter gets rid of a thought and he is given an identical thought of another person. How much will his ontic identity be affected? I think I should answer that I do not know.⁴⁶ First, it may be a lot or not at all. Second, it can be hard to determine it. Now imagine Peter's getting rid of a feeling and being given an identical feeling of another. Here I think we can say that, first, it is difficult to conceive what an identical feeling would mean. I am inclined to say there is no such thing as an identical feeling of another. Since feeling (or emotion) cannot be *subjectless* and is by its essence *subjective* and inseparable

⁴⁵ They build it in the sense of their being thought, that is experienced, by that rather than another person.

⁴⁶ I don't assume it is meaningless, yet its importance is lower than that of feeling (or emotion).

from the *subject*, we may say, I think, that if Peter gets rid of his feeling (or emotion), his identity is affected, and the more a removed feeling involves the subject, the more his ontic personal identity is affected by its removal.

Conclusion

My aim was to propose and test affectivity as a criterion for personal identity. I started by giving arguments for affectivity being a better criterion for personal identity than thinking. Then I clarified that my proposal is to be taken in its weak version: affectivity as being *only one* of the criteria for personal identity. Next, I dealt with the synchronic vs. diachronic as well as with the ontic vs. epistemic distinction: my proposal concerns the diachronic ontic personal identity. Finally, I considered the realm of affectivity in its temporal dimension. Only then did my argument turn to chiefly long- or everlasting feelings (or emotions) and, for the most part, those which involve the feeling subject more rather than less. Insofar as they are genuine and form the very core of a person, they cannot be eliminated without harming a person's identity. A reduction of genuine feelings (or emotions) would imply a change of her identity.

Ideally, it would be useful to get a criterion for both synchronic and diachronic, and for both epistemic and ontic personal identity. Since I was unable to provide such, my aim was much more modest and even given the restriction introduced, what I obtained is that affectivity is a criterion for personal identity to some extent only, i.e., as much as affective experiences are lasting and for the time they last. This is not much because since one person's affectivity may vary from another's, the same is valid for their personal identities.

Although I did not prove that affectivity is a criterion for personal identity, I answered the question to what extent and how affectivity may secure the diachronic ontic personal identity. This may not seem much, but is better than nothing. The extent to which personal identity extends depends on affectivity's duration, which means that it depends on the quality of the affective life of a person: the more stable the affective life of a person, the stronger, i.e., the more durable, her diachronic ontic personal identity is.

Now, I referred more than once to Proust's novel. Let me do it for the last time, given I have somehow arrived at a conclusion much similar to what he expressed in the following: “[f]or a man cannot change, that is to say become another person, while he continues to obey the sentiments of the self which he has ceased to be” (tr. C. K. Scott Moncrieff modified).⁴⁷ I think that my contention is similar to Proust's, though his is expressed in a negative way: unless one changes one's long- or everlasting feelings (emotions), one remains the same person.⁴⁸ And this is to say that

⁴⁷ Proust (2014a; the original tr. has *dictates* instead of *sentiments*) [= Proust (1999a: 301): “Car on ne peut pas changer, c'est-à-dire devenir une autre personne, tout en continuant à obéir aux sentiments de celle qu'on n'est plus”]. See also Proust (2014c): “And yet I no longer loved her, I was no longer the being who loved her but a different one who did not love her and I had ceased to love her when I became that other being”. [= Proust (1999c: 2393): “Or je ne l'aimais plus, j'étais, non plus l'être qui l'aimait, mais un être différent qui ne l'aimait pas, j'avais cessé de l'aimer quand j'étais devenu un autre”].

⁴⁸ In a nutshell it is present already in Homer (1919: 11, 552-556). See Zaborowski (2005: 13f.).

affectivity, as long as it lasts, is a criterion for diachronic ontic personal identity. To know how long affectivity may last and if there may be *very long*-lasting or outright *everlasting* affectivity - which, from the conceptual point of view, is the best candidate for a criterion for diachronic ontic personal identity - is an issue I tried to confront but which should be treated separately on another occasion with or without relation to personal identity.

I would like to end with three remarks.

- 1) Above I have hinted at the degree of a subject's affective involvement as relevant to personal identity. A proviso is needed. Although I think it does matter to diachronic ontic personal identity and that the more involvement the more solid personal identity, a more involving feeling (or emotion) may happen to be less important for the temporal aspect of personal identity than another one, a less involving feeling (or emotion) but which lasts longer. Compare, for example, a long-lasting fondness with a relatively short-lasting love, provided that love is more involving than fondness.
- 2) An interesting fact is that ontic personal identity does not have necessarily - or have to a limited extent only - an effect on the epistemic one. I may not know someone's feelings and do not recognize her because of ignoring her feelings but this fact has no impact on her ontic personal identity: since she does have her feelings, her ontic personal identity is constituted by them regardless of an observer's recognizing her as identical with her. Most certainly, the deeper and less conspicuous her feelings (or emotions) are, the more difficult it is for them to be known to an observer.
- 3) Fiocco (2021) has argued - most interestingly to my mind - that there is not and cannot be such a thing as a criterion for personal identity.⁴⁹ I think the last remark above accords with his claim: we may not know about someone's personal identity which, nevertheless, exists if it exists and it exists if she whose personal identity it is, exists. My point is that - conceptually - (1) if there is a person of whom there is a diachronic ontic personal identity, a diachronic ontic personal identity of her exists and (2) this fact may happen to be known only from a 1st person perspective in which case her insight into herself is substantially different from her insight into other persons. (1) is an ontic and (2) an epistemic thesis.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ See Fiocco (2021: 7237): "Being identical to itself is attendant upon the very existence of a thing and so is beyond explanation in terms of some other thing and is, in this sense, primitive. [...] In neither case is identity some thing beyond the existence of a thing, so, in this sense too, there is nothing to identity".

⁵⁰ See Fiocco (2021: 7328 & 7331): "This conclusion that each thing is fundamental does not, in itself, provide any insight into what things or what kinds of thing are in the world. Nevertheless, the fundamentality of all things does provide grounds for accepting that oneself, one's mental states and the various things one confronts when engaging the world, be they qualitative or non-qualitative, universal or particular, are all fundamental. [...] a thing's being identical to itself is not distinct from how that thing is qualitatively [...] Since each thing is fundamental, it just is what it is and how it is essentially. [...] No thing, however, could be a different kind of thing than what it in fact is". Certainly: if it were a different thing than what it is, it would be a different thing.

Declarations

Conflict of Interest The author has no conflicts of interest to declare. I certify that the submission is original work and is not under review at any other publication.

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