

# The Kantian view of dark representations and their function in practical life, according to the anthropological notes of the Critical Period

*[A visão kantiana das representações obscuras e sua função na vida prática, de acordo com as notas antropológicas do Período Crítico]*

**Luciana Martínez<sup>1</sup>**

Universidade Federal do Paraná (Curitiba, Brasil)/Universität Vechta (Vechta, Alemanha)

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## Abstract

This contribution examines the doctrine of dark representations as it is presented in the anthropological annotations of the critical period. The explanation of such representations is analysed, taking into account the analogies used for this purpose. Three kinds of manifestations of such representations in everyday life are then considered: our connection with death and fear, the development of certain feelings, such as respect, and their effects, and the way we produce philosophical knowledge.

**Keywords:** Dark representations; Fear; Feelings; Honour; Philosophy.

## Resumo

Esta contribuição examina a doutrina das representações obscuras tal como ela é apresentada nas anotações antropológicas do período crítico. A explicação de tais representações é analisada, levando em conta as analogias usadas para esse fim. Três tipos de manifestações dessas representações na vida cotidiana são então considerados: nossa conexão com a morte e o medo, o desenvolvimento de certos sentimentos, como o respeito, e seus efeitos, e o modo como produzimos conhecimento filosófico.

**Palavras-chave:** Representações obscuras; Medo; Sentimentos; Honra; Filosofia.

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<sup>1</sup> luciana.mtnz@gmail.com. This study was financed in part by the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior – Brasil (CAPES) – Finance Code 001, within the scope of the project *Kantian Perspectives on social irrationality*.

## Introduction

What does it mean that our representations are dark?<sup>2</sup> And are there such representations in our minds? These questions have been of interest to many modern philosophers, and Immanuel Kant has been no exception. All along the Kantian sources we can find several references to this issue. This does not imply that the philosopher's position has been univocal throughout his life. References to dark representations in sources from different disciplines are not unambiguous either. Logical texts differ from critical publications and the anthropological corpus in their approach to such representations. The pre-critical anthropological corpus has already been studied in a previous article and the logical corpus is examined in another essay. In this paper, we will focus on the anthropological sources of the critical period, i.e. the 1780s.

For his Anthropology lectures, Kant used the section of Alexander G. Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* devoted to empirical psychology. Baumgarten points out that a person thinks sometimes distinctively, sometimes confusedly. The characteristic feature of confusing thinking is that in it we do not distinguish the notes of what we represent. When we do distinguish the notes of our representation, then we think with distinction. That which we cannot think with distinction remains instead a dark representation. Obscurity is a feature of our sensible representations, whose notes we have not distinguished through thought. Our thinking is able to give distinction to our representations, as long as it distinguishes their notes. Baumgarten states that there are dark representations in the soul. In the text, he explicitly links the obscurity of certain representations with the position of one's body in the universe. Therefore, the soul is conceived by him as a force (*vis*) that represents the universe according to the position of the corresponding body in it.<sup>3</sup>

In his lectures, Kant developed an explanation of the subject that differs significantly from Baumgarten's position. Besides, over the years his thoughts seem to become more precise and orderly. On the one hand, he establishes a specification of concepts. To clarity (*Klarheit*) he opposes obscurity (*Dunkelheit*); to distinction, indistinction (*Deutlichkeit*, *Undeutlichkeit*). Moreover, he abandons the identification of confused (*verworren*) knowledge with sensible knowledge and the explanation of all of them on the basis of the position of the knowing body in the universe.<sup>4</sup> Throughout all the anthropology notes currently available, however, we notice that he maintains the thesis that *there are* dark representations, which are unconscious representations.

As stated, then, in this paper we will examine some aspects of dark representations, in accordance with the considerations contained in the anthropology lectures of the critical period.<sup>5</sup> The texts taken into consideration are, in particular, the anthropological notes *Menschenkunde* from the winter semester 1781-1782, *Mongrovius* from 1784-1785 and *Busolt* from 1788-1789. All these notes are published in volume 25 of the Academic Edition of Kant's works.<sup>6</sup> The Kantian doctrine of dark representations in the pre-critical period has been the topic of a previous research (Martínez, 2014). In the present paper we develop the conclusions of a subsequent research, focusing on the critical period of Kantian philosophy. As in the pre-critical period, these annotations reveal the philosopher's commitment to the existence of dark representations. Moreover, Kant goes on to argue that most of our mental life involves this kind

2 In this article, we will mainly use the term "dark" to translate the German term "*dunkel*". The term "*obscure*" could equally well be used, but I think it should be reserved for translating the passages in which Kant expresses "*obscure*", which by all means seems to be interchangeable with "*dunkel*".

3 Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, §§505-513, en AA 15:5f.

4 Cf. Sánchez Rodríguez (2012, 2013).

5 This article focuses on pragmatic-psychological explanations of unconscious representations and their manifestations in practical everyday life. The investigation of the treatment of the relation of our unconscious representations to Kant's practical critical philosophy has been developed by P. Giordanetti (2012).

6 In this paper, Kant's works are quoted from the academic edition, according to the standard conventions explained in the journal *Kant Studien*.

of representation.

Similarly, in the later lectures we find some of the images and metaphors that were already present in the early classes. Through these rhetoric resources, the nature of dark representations and their link with the rest of our mental life is explained. We refer in particular, on the one hand, to the metaphor of our mind as a map that has only some parts enlightened, and on the other hand, to the explanation of the difference between clear and dark representations by means of some appreciations on the observation of the Milky Way.

In the lecture notes of the critical period we find, moreover, some novelties with respect to the previous period. First, Kant distinguishes two ways in which we are linked to dark representations. On the one hand, they constitute us. We are a set of dark representations, which condition the way we live. On the other hand, Kant points out that we play with dark representations. Additionally, in the later lectures the philosopher goes further into the examination of the visible effects of our dark representations on actual life and decisions. In the notes of the pre-critical period we have found a rather detailed study of the very notion of dark representations, criticisms of Baumgarten, explicit references to Hume and Locke, and, especially, a linking of dark representations with our feelings of pleasure/displeasure, with the doctrine of prejudice and with their function in knowledge. In the notes from the critical period, on the other hand, the approach to the subject is briefer and the references are more related to practical, everyday aspects of our lives, as we shall see.

In the following, we will first analyse the meaning of dark representations and the Kantian arguments concerning their existence and the way in which they are reached. Secondly, we will explain in what sense “we are a play of dark representations” and in what sense Kant considers that “we play with dark representations”.<sup>7</sup> Finally, we will deal with three aspects of our practical daily life in which it is shown that dark representations constitute us. Hence, after reviewing the Kantian presentation of dark representations, we will examine the following effects of them: our link with the issue of death, the relation between lies and honour, and the philosophical task as a procedure of analysing representations.

## 1. The notion of dark representations and the claim that they exist.

According to student notes from a variety of disciplines, taken in the critical period, dark representations are those of which I am not *directly* conscious, but of which I may be *indirectly* conscious through inference.<sup>8</sup> They present themselves in mere sensation and we become conscious of them through inferences.<sup>9</sup> But what does it mean to be conscious (*bewußt*) of a representation? Unlike in the pre-critical lectures, the explanations in the notes of the period under review are brief.<sup>10</sup> Within the framework of the pragmatic-anthropological approach, the notion of self-consciousness interests Kant for the purpose of explaining the problems involved in focusing attention (*Aufmerksamkeit*) on oneself, rather than on other objects. One of these problems, for example, is hypochondria.<sup>11</sup> Kant explains that we can distinguish between subjective and objective consciousness. Our consciousness is subjective when we direct our

7 V-Anth/ Mensch, AA 25: 869; V-Anth/Mrong, AA 25: 1221; V-Anth/Bus, AA 25: 1440.

8 V-Met/Mrong, AA 29:879. V-Log./ Wien., AA 24: 805; V- Log./ Pöl., AA 24: 510.

9 V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 867.

10 In this paper we will not deal with the critical notion of consciousness, neither in its theoretical use nor in the practical context. For a general explanation and a summary of some comments, see Kitcher, P., in Willaschek et al. 2010, 281-285. In the framework of logic courses, consciousness is presented as a “representation of our representations” (V-Log/Dohna-Wund, AA 24:701), or as the representation that we have representations. The consciousness of representations is, however, a starting point for logic, which does not deal with dark representations. Cf. V-Log/Wien, AA 24: 805.

11 V-Anth/ Mensch, AA 25: 862.

thoughts to our existence and to our mind itself; it is objective when we direct it to other objects.<sup>12</sup> According to the notes, he considered it healthier and more profitable to direct our attention to other objects.<sup>13</sup>

After exhibiting the disadvantages of concentrating attention on oneself, the professor dealt with attention to others. He moved from subjective to objective consciousness of objects. It is pointed out that we have both clear and dark representations of things, and that Kant was interested in concentrating on the latter.<sup>14</sup> In the notes we can read that dark representations are unconscious (*unbewußt*) and that we do not know (*wissen*) that we have them.<sup>15</sup> However, Kant would have considered it to be a mistake to assume that those representations of which we are not conscious are nothing to us. This is why he opposed John Locke and argued that most of our mental life is made up of dark representations. According to Kant, moreover, these representations are the very foundation of the others. To have representations and yet not to be conscious of them seems a contradiction; for how could we know that we have them if we are not conscious of them? Kant considered this to be the position of Locke,<sup>16</sup> who therefore would have rejected the existence of such representations. But as stated, Kant would have argued that we can be *indirectly* conscious of having a representation, even if we are not directly conscious of it.<sup>17</sup>

Now then, how is the difference between being conscious of a representation immediately and through reasoning to be understood? Kant suggests an explanation through certain images. For him, the dark representations are in us in the same way that the stars of the Milky Way were visible to the eyes of the ancients when they saw it without the support of instruments. If we look at the night sky, without using any equipment, we can see a blurred band of white light. In fact, its name comes from the mythology of the Greek tradition, for which the origin of this light was the milk spilled by its mother when she breastfed Hercules. To anyone looking at the sky without the aid of a telescope, the Milky Way looks like some white light. Only with the development of the telescope, Galileo Galilei was able to see that such a band of light actually consisted of a cluster of stars. The human eye does not identify the stars that compose it and they are therefore not perceived. However, their effect is presented to the eye. What the ancients saw was precisely the effect of something that was certainly there without being noticed. Our link to our dark representations is analogous to the link the ancients had with the stars of the Milky Way. Our dark representations are in our minds and we have access to their effects. But we are not conscious of them themselves. When we represent ourselves and our representations, we do not consider our dark representations. However, their effects are part of our mental life.<sup>18</sup>

On this point, before advancing our argument, I would like to raise two remarks. First of all, if, as we pointed out, Kant considers that dark representations become accessible through their effects, the examples he provides in this respect undergo some changes in the critical period, according to the available testimonies. One of the most noticeable modifications is the omission of prejudices. Instead of referring to them, in the lectures of the 1980s Kant seems to have chosen to mention the relation of dark representations to certain feelings that affect practical life. In addition, the treatment of analytic philosophy and its relation to the ideas of Socrates is developed in greater detail. As mentioned above, these issues will be addressed

12 V-Anth/Mrong, AA 25:1219.

13 V-Anth/Mrong, AA 25:1219.

14 V-Anth/Mrong, AA 25:1221.

15 V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 867.

16 Strictly speaking, in the *Essay* (II.xxix.5), Locke develops a slightly different line of argument, which is more in line with objections that Kant presents in other texts, such as KrV B415n. Locke says that the idea we have in our mind is the representation we have and it differs from the others in so far as it is that way. That is, if we have two ideas which we cannot distinguish from each other, then we have no criterion for distinguishing them and it makes no sense to hold that they are two different ideas.

17 Anth, AA 07: 135. V-Met/Mrong, AA 29: 879.

18 V-Anth/Mrong, AA 25: 1221.

in the following sections. The second point I would like to stress is that in the available notes a semantics of causes and effects is played out to explain the relationship between dark representations, which are described as causes or foundations (*Gründe, Quelle*) and conscious life, which is presented as an effect of them.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, for Kant, that there are dark representations is something we know indirectly, insofar as we can appreciate their effects. But the philosopher considers, moreover, that these dark representations constitute the greatest part of our mental life. Our mind is described in the notes as a map in which only certain parts are enlightened. Most of its surface remains obscured. As can be seen from this analogy, dark representations are in a majority and are also fundamental to our mental life. Besides, the image of the map that represents our mind is a constant that we find already in the notes of the first lectures of our philosopher, in the 1770s.

## 2. The dual *Spiel* of the dark representations

Our relation to our dark representations is, for Kant, twofold. This point is a novelty of the annotations of the critical decade. The differentiation that we will detail here is not developed in the pre-critical anthropology lectures, but is present in all the notes from the 1780s that are currently available. On the one hand, as we have stated, numerous dark representations constitute our mental life. This is reflected in certain attitudes. Thus, for example, some of our fears and beliefs, as well as some of our feelings, are based on dark representations. We will deal with this feature, which Kant enunciates by saying that “we are a play of dark representations” in the next section of this work.

On the other hand, Kant points out that in addition to “being a play of dark representations”, we “play with dark representations”. This aspect is not the main focus of our research, so we will comment on it in a general way. In this case, Kant refers to certain modes of communication in which we deliberately do not make explicit everything we want to say. Kant mentions that, in particular, for example, we are deliberately obscure when referring to aspects of life in which we resemble animals.<sup>20</sup> One example is the talk about sex. This discourse is full of metaphors and paraphrases that obscure what is referred to. There is a kind of play between what is said and what is not said, sometimes for reasons of discretion and often for reasons of satisfaction.<sup>21</sup> The suggestiveness and metaphors are pleasing to us. That is why we use literary tropes and pictures.

The anthropological treatment of dark representations thus has two dimensions. On the one hand, a myriad of dark representations are in our minds and affect, without our being conscious of it, the way we think and act. On the other hand, these representations fulfil significant social functions insofar as we make use of them for playful purposes. We deliberately take advantage of the difference between what is said, what is conscious, and what is suggested and unspoken. In this case, there seems to be a dark side to communication and interaction. This aspect does not have to do with the subject's lack of consciousness, but with deliberately omitted presuppositions and premises of his speech. As anticipated, in this paper we will concentrate on the first aspect of dark representations. Then, in particular, we will examine some effects of such representations on the action of the subjects.

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<sup>19</sup> V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 869.

<sup>20</sup> V-Anth/Dohna, Ko 80.

<sup>21</sup> V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25:872-874; V-Anth/Mrong, AA 25:1224.

### 3. Dark representations and fear

A series of examples illustrating the relevance of dark representations in our everyday life is recurrently mentioned in the anthropological annotations of the critical period. At this point, a topic from the philosophical tradition is taken up, which is that of our fear and preoccupation with death. Already in his *letter to Meneceus*, Epicurus had pointed out that death, as a deprivation of feeling, is nothing to us and that for this reason it is meaningless to worry about it. In death, there is simply no pain. The approach to the subject in Kant's lectures, however, is from a different perspective, namely that of empathic concern for the other who has died.

Unreasonable though it is, it is argued, we regret when someone young dies. Reason suggests to us that the dead person feels nothing. However, dark representations lead us to imagine him in the grave and feel pity. Our conscious, rational thinking teaches us that the person who has died does not experience any discomfort, moreover, he does not experience anything. But something unconscious in us motivates enormous grief and expresses itself in feelings of sorrow. These feelings are the conscious manifestation of causes that sink into the darkness of the mind.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, we worry about the stay of the dead body, as if it were relevant in any respect. For that body, however, everything is totally indifferent, even the place it occupies. The concern of those who reflect on where to deposit the corpse is not based on reasoning and rather seems to go against the indications of reason.<sup>23</sup>

Kant says something similar about the origin of some of our fears. When we climb a very high and well-built tower, we have an irrational fear of falling. We are conscious that statistics make our downfall unlikely and that construction is designed to provide us with security. However, such reasoning is not enough to overcome the fear, which presses upon us. Our fears are not based on reasons. Instead, they are grounded in unconscious representations, of unknown origin, which we cannot control.<sup>24</sup> Kant also mentioned other fears whose source seems to have been dark representations. For example, if we see a weak bridge over a river and see other people crossing it successfully, it may well be that we are afraid. Again, in this case, reason indicates that with caution we will come out safely, and the statistics point in the same direction. But our fear presents itself as inevitable.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, the line of argument suggested in the anthropology notes adopts a number of feelings as a starting point. Such feelings, like grief and fear, are manifested in our lives and suggest irrational motivations. If we examine their origin, we notice that they point to unconscious representations, which we only notice when we pay attention to them.

### 4. Dark representations, lies and honour

Another situation in which Kant warned of the incidence of dark representations is that of lying. Lying is, for our philosopher, irrational behaviour.<sup>26</sup> There are no motivations originating in our reason, which rather incites us to always remain truthful, in order to lie. The notorious Jorge Luis Borges has pointed this out with irony, according to the records of his colleague and friend Adolfo Bioy Casares:

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<sup>22</sup> V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 870.

<sup>23</sup> V-Anth/Mrong, AA 25: 1223.

<sup>24</sup> V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 870.

<sup>25</sup> V-Anth/Mrong, AA 25: 1222.

<sup>26</sup> It has already been noted that Kant does not define the lie in the same way in all sources. For a review of the Kantian notion of a lie, we suggest to see Carson, 2010, p. 71-79.

Kant said that one should never lie. His example is that if a person who is going to kill a man asks if this one has passed this way, one should tell him the truth, even if the consequence is death. For the pedantry of not lying, let someone die. Kant demands of the categorical imperative that the maxim of every action applies to all, no matter what the circumstances.<sup>27</sup>

Borges' reference seems to be the text "On a Supposed Right to Lie from Philanthropy", 1797.<sup>28</sup> But Kant had referred to the lie even earlier. In the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant indeed describes lying as "the greatest violation of man's duty to himself, considered merely as a moral being".<sup>29</sup> And in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, moreover, he uses the example of the fulfilment of promises to differentiate action out of duty from pragmatic action, determined by contingent ends.<sup>30</sup> We are not interested here in dwelling on the moral or legal treatment of lying,<sup>31</sup> which is certainly a complex subject that nevertheless exceeds the limits of this paper.<sup>32</sup> Rather, we are concerned here with the anthropological aspect of the lie detailed in the lecture notes of the critical decade. This aspect finds that lying is an insight into our dark representations. In particular, we are concerned to highlight that, according to the sources analysed, it seems that for Kant there is something unconscious in the foundation of our lies. Reason and its imperatives do not constitute the only motive for us to be truthful.

In the lectures the situation in physics is compared with the situation in moral research. In the first case, we are always dealing with knowledge of which we are conscious. In the case of morality, on the other hand, men's motivations are lost in a multitude of dark representations. In particular, it is suggested that the reason we regard lying as something that undermines men's honour is a dark representation that needs to be examined by philosophers.<sup>33</sup> Lying is always reprehensible, it is argued, not only because lying is wrong, but also because it affects the honour of men. The leitmotif suggested by the available notes seems to link an additional compelling reason not to lie that is connected to our sense of honour.

The concept of honour is mentioned several times in the anthropological annotations. In them, moreover, it is commented that honour is often approached as a "feeling". In the notes we have, we read that it is fashionable to call it "feeling" and that it is not clear how we could actually *feel* honour. It is interesting to note that, in the pre-critical period, Kant already referred to this feeling in particular.<sup>34</sup> In a pre-critical text, in fact, Kant mentions the feeling of honour as a criterion to explain national differences between diverse European cultures.<sup>35</sup> However, such a feeling functions in us as an admittedly hidden cause for liking some judgements of others about ourselves. It is also a reason why it is so important for us to be certain that such judgements are correct. At this point, it is suggested (and unfortunately not developed) that the idea of honour, understood as a dark representation, primarily affects the realm of private judgement and non-arbitrated interaction. The feeling of honour makes us care intimately that others think well of us and that they have an adequate representation of our virtues. This dark idea is the basis for a claim to a private sphere for the judgement about our value. The available notes suggest that it is a very hard task for philosophy to examine such thought and to understand the non-rational

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27 Bioy Casares, 2006, p. 738.

28 A further discussion of the notion of lying in this text can be found in Wagner (1978), Stolzenberg (2010).

29 MS, AA 06:429.

30 GMS, AA 04:402.

31 On the moral problem, see Korsgaard (1996). On the legal approach, Granja Castro et al (2012).

32 An example of the complexity of the debates surrounding the problem of lying is Carson's thesis, for whom it is not the case that it is always wrong to lie, according to Kant. Cf. Carson, 2010, p. 79-88.

33 V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 871.

34 This reference is mentioned in the detailed explanation of the notion of *Gefühl* by Jean-Christophe Merle in the *Kant-Lexicon*. In the entry on moral feeling, moreover, the same author explains what this feeling means and how its conception changes with criticism. Cf. Willaschek et al 2015, p. 693ff.

35 Cf. *Beobachtungen*, AA 02: 249.

motivations for such a claim.<sup>36</sup> In the lectures on practical philosophy of the same period, in addition, the desire for honour is described as an original inclination (*ursprüngliche Neigung*), the reasons for which we cannot elucidate.<sup>37</sup>

In this way, a feeling of dark origins causes us to be concerned about the opinion of others about us and to avoid lying in order not to affect that image. This dark aspect of our mind is part of our psychology and affects how we conduct ourselves in society and how we represent our position in it.

## 5. Dark representations and philosophical research

In the lectures of the critical period, Kant finally takes up again an aspect of the topic that had already interested him earlier. It is the importance of dark representations for philosophical research. In this respect, we can observe that the philosopher develops two issues. On the one hand, he deals with the figure of Socrates, as the deliverer of ideas. On the other hand, he refers to the analytical aspect of philosophical research.<sup>38</sup>

Socrates guided his interlocutors in a search for knowledge they already had, without noticing it. According to his philosophical position, he was able to help us in the process of reminiscence by which we would reach the non-immediate and more certain truths. One function of the philosopher resembles that identified in Socrates and his metaphor of the midwife. Just as a midwife brings a child into the world, Socrates (and the philosopher in general) brings to light ideas that are dark and unconscious.<sup>39</sup> For Kant, this Socratic procedure, which allows us to elucidate prior knowledge, is the most suitable for philosophy. A large part of the task of philosophy is precisely identified with the analysis of concepts.<sup>40</sup> Usually, the task of the philosopher consists precisely in making conscious thoughts that were ignored. In this way, philosophy, when it enlightens us on such familiar matters as freedom, causality or duty, exhibits an aspect of our mind: in it our lighter ideas are linked to dark ones, and we are able to explore these links and bring the dark representations into clarity. Mention of this task of philosophy, which consists in going through our representations and trying to elucidate those that are not clear to us, can be found in numerous passages of Kantian work, even before criticism.

Thus, for example, in his *Inquiry Concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality*, a text written in 1762, he explains the task of philosophy as an analytical procedure. In this science, we are confronted with a concept that is already given, the concept of a thing. But this concept is for us confused or indeterminate. For this reason, we must analyse it and determine the notes and their relations. Kant describes a sequence of actions that is necessary in the definition of the philosophical concept. First I must decompose it, then I must compare the assembled notes with the concept. Finally, I must make the abstract thought I already have become detailed and determined. Kant illustrates his explanation by means of an example. It is the concept of time. Kant states the following: we all have a concept of time. Now, this concept needs to be elucidated. To do this, I must study its idea in all its relations, to discover notes by means of its decomposition. Then I must put the various notes together and see whether they constitute a sufficient concept. Finally, I must see if there are redundancies,

<sup>36</sup> V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 869f.

<sup>37</sup> V-Prakt Phil/ Pow, AA 27: 221.

<sup>38</sup> For a detailed examination of the model of science Kant had in mind and how he redefines the notion of analysis, see Engfer (1982).

<sup>39</sup> V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 871; V-Anth/Mröng, AA 25: 1222.

<sup>40</sup> V-Log/ Dohna-Wund, 24: 780.



that is, if any of those notes are contained in the others.<sup>41</sup> A philosophical definition is the explanation of the content of an idea, i.e. of the representation of a thing. The task of the philosopher is to make our unclear representations comprehensible. The idea that we have dark or unclear representations that we need to enlighten and that it is the task of the philosopher to elucidate is recurrently developed in the sources.

Later, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the procedure of *exposition* with which Kant begins the investigation of sensibility seems to point to the same thing, as does the explanation of the method of philosophy that we find in the “Discipline of Pure Reason in its Dogmatic Use”. However, the analytical procedure that characterises philosophical knowledge does not exhaust what the latter is.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, analysis is not only identified with the capacity to make our dark representations conscious. What we read in the anthropology notes is, more precisely, that the analytical procedure is nourished by the dark representations in us.

In the empirical psychology that is suggested, without being the main topic, throughout the anthropology lectures, dark representations seem to occupy an important place in understanding the mechanisms of thinking, not only in the specific field of philosophy. The dark representations present themselves as a foundation on which our conscious representations are based. For our philosopher, *discovering* something seems to be nothing more than tracing the links that bind our representations, whether they are clear or not, in order to shed light on the obscure ones. *Remembering*, similarly, is about bringing ideas out of the darkness and into the light. That is to say, remembering is to make conscious representations already available but neglected.<sup>43</sup>

## Concluding remarks

Dark representations are unconscious representations. Kant does not specify in the sources examined what he means by this. But he does provide some metaphors that allow us to reconstruct some kind of explanation. It is about the larger part of the contents of our mind, which can be thought of as a vast map. In it, only some parts are illuminated. These clear portions are supported by the others and allow us to identify them. The procedure of identifying dark representations is a procedure that looks for the causes of certain effects.

In this article we have gone through Kant's considerations about our dark representations. In particular, we have dealt with the contents of the anthropological annotations corresponding to the critical decade. In them, as we have seen, it is still maintained that *there are* dark representations. For the philosopher, such representations would become evident from their effects, so we conclude that they exist by inference. We have examined some cases in which we are able to make such an inference. In particular, we have looked at how dark representations manifest themselves in our fears, in our feeling of respect, in analytical knowledge and in some of the usual procedures of our mind, such as discovery and memory.

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41 Deut, AA 2: 277.

42 Mario Caimi (2012) has established that the analysis that makes it possible to illuminate obscure representations is the first of a series of steps, both according to the text of 1762 and according to the “*Methodenlehre*” of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

43 V-Anth/Mrong, AA 25: 1221.

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