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## Issue Introduction

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## The Philosophy of Memory: Introduction

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As a pervasive and fundamental feature of human experience, memory has long provided fertile ground for philosophical work. Memory appears in a wide and disparate range of philosophical projects and traditions—from the writings of Plato and Aristotle in Ancient Greece to the work of early Buddhist philosophers like Śābara and Buddhaghosa, from epistemological questions about the retention of knowledge, to metaphysical debates about the nature of personal identity, to phenomenological inquiries into our experience of time and history. As a primary mental capacity, memory has played a particularly important role in the work of philosophers interested in minds and cognition, especially as interdisciplinary cognitive science has developed over the last several decades. The extensive points of contact between memory and philosophy are not surprising: interest in memory arises nearly any time a concept, ability, or entity needs to be extended and retained, as in investigations of persons, time, knowledge, the self, and experience. Whenever we are doing philosophy, memory is not far.

Despite, or perhaps because of, this wide-reaching character, the philosophy of memory as a focused area of inquiry in philosophy has been a relative latecomer. The comparison

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to perception is illustrative: memory and perception are arguably comparable in their centrality to human cognition and experience, and yet contemporary work in the philosophy of perception outstrips that in the philosophy of memory by at least an order of magnitude. In recent years, this has begun to change, as a collection of work devoted to the philosophy of memory has begun to emerge. This work draws on a diverse array of sources—empirical, conceptual, and literary, from both inside and outside philosophy—and makes use of a number of varying frameworks in order to approach memory philosophically. It is our hope that the present volume will contribute to this ongoing development.

In keeping with the diversity of these approaches, we have solicited and received a collection of essays that reflect the wide range of ways in which memory is interrogated philosophically. These essays each take different facets of memory as their respective targets and discuss memory within distinctive research traditions. Presenting them alongside one another, we hope, generates new insights. Given especially the nascent stage at which the philosophy of memory finds itself, there is reason to believe that this volume's pluralism will help to both refine basic concepts and prompt new questions.

The first essay, Nikola Andonovski's "Is Episodic Memory a Natural Kind?," lies at the intersection of the memory taxonomies of psychology and natural kind literatures in philosophy of science. Memory taxonomies remain controversial (as do natural kinds), and Andonovski takes up this controversy by responding to an argument from Cheng and Werning (2016) that presented episodic memory—our memory for episodes from our personal past—as a natural kind, borrowing the *homeostatic property cluster* view of natural kinds. Indeed, it is the very controversy of memory taxonomy itself that Andonovski makes use of here, arguing that the characterization from Cheng and Werning misses a key and needed feature of these natural kinds: the ability to arbitrate between competing taxonomies. If we are to carve the nature of memory at its joints, argues Andonovski, it cannot be carved thus.

In the second essay, "Learning and Vision: Johann Gottfried Herder on Memory," Laura Follesa investigates the treatment of memory by German Enlightenment thinker Johann Gottfried Herder. According to Follesa, it is by Herder's specific characterization of the workings of memory, and especially memory images, that he seeks to synthesize Plato's approach to knowledge and the presuppositions of eighteenth-century German philosophy and his contemporaries. Herder uses our recollection of images, ongoing since childhood, in order to retain the structure of Platonic recollection, and to transmute this structure from a metaphysical one to a psychological one. In addition, Follesa presents parallels in Herder's thought between the childhood of an individual—and the resultant associated memory—and the infancy of humankind.

Arieh Schwartz's essay, "Memory and Disjunctivism,"—the third essay in the volume—highlights an important and previously underappreciated difficulty in contemporary accounts of remembering. Many contemporary philosophers of memory take it as an explicit desideratum that a theory of remembering should provide a way to distinguish genuine remembering from the forms of memory error well-documented in recent memory science. The aim is to provide a descriptively adequate theory of remembering. In an effort to distinguish remembering from similar mental states, many philosophers have recently proposed taxonomies of memory errors. These accounts (e.g., Cheng and Werning 2016; Robins 2016; Michaelian 2016; and Bernecker 2017) do so by appeal to an accuracy condition. Remembering and misremembering, for example, might feel the same to the person undergoing each, but they are distinct states because the former is accurate while the latter is not. Schwartz argues that framing the distinction in this way results in a commitment to disjunctivism about seeming to remember. Schwartz then shows that this form of disjunctivism conflicts with another commitment that is important for empirically sensitive philosophers of memory: psychological internalism.

What is the function of autobiographical memory? Carlos Montemayor pursues this question in "Consciousness and Memory: A Transactional Approach," the fourth essay in the volume. Montemayor offers a transactional account of autobiographical memory, pushing back on standard, epistemic accounts of memory function. To call autobiographical memory transactive is to acknowledge the role that moral concerns play in forming and evaluating these memories, which concern our selection of which memories to retain as central to ourselves and our projects and which to forget. This account requires a distinction between the role and nature of episodic and autobiographical memory. Montemayor argues that the critical features and functions of autobiographical memory resist reduction to the epistemic constraints of episodic memory. Autobiographical memories play an important, narrative-forming and self-identity-sustaining role in our lives, and so must be considered distinctly. Montemayor's dual-function view allows autobiographical memory to be transactional, while episodic memory remains epistemic.

The fifth essay, César Schirmer dos Santos's "Episodic Memory, the Cotemporality Problem, and Common Sense," addresses the cotemporality problem, which is an issue with our basic picture of memory. Although the objects of our memory seem to be past events, these past events are by their very nature no longer present. Anyone who hopes to talk of memory's contact with the past must overcome this apparent mismatch. Schirmer dos Santos defends Bernecker's (2008) eternalist solution against critics, demonstrating reasons why we should hesitate before condemning the impracticality of positing the continued existence of nonoccurrent past events.

The sixth essay is André Bilbrough's "Memory and the True Self: When Moral Knowledge Can and Cannot be Forgotten." Bilbrough considers the ways in which forgetting influences particular knowledge domains distinctly. He focuses on moral knowledge, which many have argued cannot be forgotten, on grounds of absurdity—once one learns of the wrongness of murder, theft, assault, and the like, one cannot simply forget this information (even if one goes on to engage in such wrongful acts). Bilbrough reviews work on this issue by Ryle (1958), McGrath (2015), and Bugeja (2016) and complicates the standard picture by introducing work in contemporary moral psychology and empirical philosophy. Work in these latter traditions allows for a range of distinctions between certain forms of moral knowledge and decision-making, which rely on distinct cognitive systems and bear different relations to the would-be-rememberer's identity. These distinctions allow Bilbrough to identify a set of circumstances in which, he argues, some moral knowledge can be forgotten.

In the last essay, "Doing Justice to the Past: Memory and Criticism in Herbert Marcuse," Laura Arese illustrates, via Marcuse, more and detailed parallels between memory and history. Arese argues that memory is a uniting theme across disparate threads in the work of Marcuse, and that understanding it as such allows new insights into the development of Marcuse's thought. For Marcuse, argues Arese, memory works in tandem with imagination to allow us to deconstruct the present by means of the past, both as persons and as cultures. Specifically, Marcuse is also interested in our memory—individual and collective—of both happiness lost and limits encountered, each of which makes possible our continuing imaginings and explorations of the present and future.