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*On Philosophical Concepts of Memory**

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"Remember" is one of the most frequently used English verbs to express our mnemonic phenomena. In the traditional taxonomy of memory in philosophy, called the tripartite concepts, two concepts of declarative memory – propositional and experiential memories – are distinguished. Recently, the traditional classification has been drawing criticism. Markus Werning and Sen Cheng reject the classification because it is based upon English grammar. Sven Bernecker argues that the distinction between the two concepts is «not sharp». In this paper, I defend the two philosophical concepts of memory. The argument in this paper is twofold. Despite Werning and Cheng's observation, I argue that the two memory concepts are not characterized by English grammar. Against Bernecker, I also defend the alleged ambiguity between the two memory concepts. In my view, the two types of memories appear to be «not sharp» not due to conceptual ambiguity, but rather different ways of memory attribution.

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1. Introduction

Analytic philosophers traditionally take the concept of memory to be «tripartite»[1]. Using different taxonomies, they generally agree on the distinction between non-declarative memory, typically called practical memory, and declarative memory which is subdivided into two classes – propositional (factual) memory and experiential (perceptual) memory.

Such a traditional analytic approach has been open to criticism. Recently, in the first chapter of *Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Memory*, Markus Werning and Sen Cheng attack taxonomies based upon English grammar[2]. Sven Bernecker casts a doubt on the two concepts of declarative memories in claiming that the distinction between propositional memory and experiential memory is «not sharp»[3].

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[1] S. Bernecker, *Memory: A Philosophical Study*, Oxford 2010, p. 13.

[2] M. Werning and S. Cheng, *Taxonomy and Unity of Memory. The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Memory*, ed. S. Bernecker and K. Michaelian, New York 2017, pp. 7-20.

[3] S. Bernecker, *Memory: A Philosophical Study*, cit. p. 16.

The main purpose of this paper is to defend the two philosophical concepts of memory. In the following, I will delve into the two concepts and try to illuminate relevance of the distinction. As I argue below, the two concepts are not characterized by English grammar, although there is an important sense in which the distinction is to be marked in ordinary linguistic expressions. The two traditional concepts are mainly to explicate different representational contents and modes of presentations, rather than objects, of memory and to show memory's roles in our cognitions and the relation between each other.

2. Different Targets

Recent philosophical literature on memory tends to focus on the psychological concepts, but traditionally analytic philosophers distinguish concepts of memory by appeal to grammatical features of "remember." Malcolm defines propositional memory (although he calls it factual memory) as a type of memory which is expressed by «use of "remember" in which this verb is followed by a clause of the form "that *p*", where for "*p*" there may be substituted any sentence expressing a proposition»[4]. And he remarks that a different type of memory is attributed when «[s]eeing or hearing (or smelling, if that is possible) something in one's mind or head is identical with having a "mental image" of the thing»[5]. Following C. D. Broad, Malcolm calls the latter type of memory *perceptual memory*, which is subsequently known as experiential memory. Declarative memories have been thus classified into two sub-classes in history of analytic philosophy.

Marcus Werning and Sen Cheng attack any attempt to characterize episodic and semantic memories by appeal to English grammar. They claim,

> One, for instance, quite frequently finds authors who base their distinction between episodic and semantic memory on the grammatical distinction between gerundival […] and that-clause constructions […] However, this grammatical variation seems to be rather particular to English and not at all universal. In a language as closely akin as German, the gerundival construction does not exist (or is strongly marked) and all cases have to go with the that(*dass*)-clause construction[6].

Werning and Cheng are right in two respects. First, many languages do not seem to be equipped with such a grammatical apparatus clearly distinguishing two types of memories as English does. Second, any attempt to distinguish episodic and semantic memories based upon one particular language is misleading.

Werning and Cheng's observation, however, is rather hasty, if not confused. It is not frequent, to say the least, in traditional philosophical literature that semantic and episodic memories are thus characterized. For, as I will argue below,

[4] N. Malcolm, *Knowledge and Certainty*, Ithaca 1963, pp. 203-204.
[5] *Ibid*., pp. 207
[6] M. Werning and S. Cheng, *Taxonomy and Unity of Memory*, cit., p. 9.

the traditional literature does not distinguish semantic and episodic memories, nor does it grammatically distinguish the two concepts of propositional and experiential memories. Hence, if Werning and Cheng's criticism is directed toward the traditional analytic discussion over the propositional/experiential distinction, they are simply misguided. In the next section, I will summarize the historical background of the concepts of propositional and experiential memories, and show that the distinction is not grammatically introduced.

Although what the episodic/semantic distinction is ultimately intended to illuminate is not crystal-clear, they are demarcated mainly in terms of their objects[7]. Michaelian, for instance, succinctly explains the difference between episodic and semantic memory in this way, «[d]eclarative memory divides into episodic memory, concerned with recalling the events of the personal past, and semantic memory, concerned with recalling facts or propositions»[8]. On the other hand, as I will argue below, traditional philosophers classify the two concepts in terms of their *representational content*. For, they are interested in explicating the conceptual connection between types of memories and other human cognitions, and mark the relevance of memory in our cognitive lives.

3. Grammatical Characterization

Werning and Cheng's main complaint clearly points to an obvious worry about the grammatical taxonomy. Given that memory is a universal human, or even a more general phenomenon, it is simply unlikely that the conceptual distinction within mnemonic phenomena is expressed only in «a grammatical variation that one language offers and another does not»[9]. Hence, if the distinction is based upon a grammatical idiosyncrasy of "remember," we have good reason to reject it.

In fact, the present worry originates in a misunderstanding. While acknowledging that the concept of propositional memory is grammatically characterized, Sven Bernecker remarks that the propositional and experiential distinction does not come from English grammar[10]. He says,

> Some experiential memories are expressed by a combination of 'remember' with a gerund (*e. g.* I remember having spent a few days in Rome), others by a that-clause (*e. g.* I remember that I spent a few days in Rome), and again others by some other construction. Since experiential memory cannot be defined by the kind of complement

[7] It is worth pointing out that Tulving was influenced by Munsat's *Concept of Memory*. E. Tulving, *Elements of episodic memory*, Oxford 1983, p. 29.
[8] K. Michaelian, *Mental Time Travel: Episodic Memory and Our Knowledge of the Personal Past*, Cambridge 2016, pp.19-20.
[9] M. Werning and S. Cheng, *Taxonomy and Unity of Memory*, cit., p. 9.
[10] He does not support the propositional/experiential distinction, however. See Section 5 onward.

phrase used to express it, there is no clear correlation between the grammatical form of a memory report and the kind of memory expressed[11].

His observation is well-grounded in history. C. D. Broad is one of the earliest philosophers who feature the concept of experiential memory. He notes that «[i]t seems plain that there is one and only one kind of memory which can plausibly be regarded as closely analogous to perception; and this is the memory of particular events, places, persons, or things»[12]. Broad then exemplifies such a use of "remember" by citing the following four sentences:

(A) «I remember having my hair cut last week».
(B) «I remember the tie which my friend wore yesterday».
(C) «I remember the feeling which I had when I last went to the dentist».
(D) «I remember hearing Mr Russell lecture»[13].

Those sentences refer to different «Perceptual Memory-Situations»[14], according to Broad, all of which we may legitimately count as experiential memory.

Following Broad, Malcolm also remarks that "remember" may take different types of grammatical objects, and «[i]t is wrong, however, to suppose that sentences of those grammatical forms always express perceptual memory»[15]. Along with a cautious remark about «the fallibility of such linguistic clues», Richard Wollheim rather points out that experiential memory is typically expressed by «a sentence of the form 'I remember (or he remembers) + direct objects', where the direct object is likely to be a nominalization of some embedded sentence»[16].

All in all, those philosophers agree that experiential memory is typically expressed by the gerundival construction. I do not deny here that those philosophers linguistically characterize memory concepts. They surely do. Yet, none of those philosophers grammatically characterize the concept of experiential memory by appeal to the gerundival construction of "remember". And among them is Bernecker, who gives up the concept of experiential memory[17]. Thus, so long as Werning and Cheng's complaint is directed toward the distinction grammatically characterized, it doesn't seem to be supported by historical evidence. It is aiming at a straw man at best.

[11] S. Bernecker, *Memory: A Philosophical Study*, cit., pp. 17.
[12] C. D. Broad, *The Mind and Its Place in Nature*, 1925, Reprint, Paterson 1960, p. 222.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 223.
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] N. Malcolm, *Knowledge and Certainty*, cit., p. 207.
[16] R. Wollheim, *The Thread of Life*, 1984, Reprint, New Heaven 1999, p. 101.
[17] S. Bernecker, *Memory: A Philosophical Study*, cit., p. 19.

4. Memory and Other Cognition

One prominent aspect of the distinction between propositional and experiential memories lies in an analogy between memory and other cognitions. Some philosophers, including Malcolm, who advocate the distinction are attracted to its analogy to Russell's famous distinction between knowledge by acquaintance and by description[18]. Experiential memory is compared to knowledge by acquaintance because of its content, and propositional memory is likewise to knowledge by description.

Even those who are not attracted to the Russellian distinction nevertheless accept a certain analogy, or find a tight conceptual connection, between types of memory and knowledge. Practical memory (remembering how) is clearly treated as retained practical knowledge (knowledge how). Many philosophers defend the knowledge retention view of propositional memory, according to which the content of propositional memory is nothing but retained propositional knowledge[19]. Even those who reject the view accept that to have a propositional memory is to retain a pro-attitude toward its positional content, as justified propositional beliefs and the like. Behind such analogies are English grammar, of course. An intuitive, and widely accepted, basis for the concept is the different types of objects of the verb, "know". Those types of memory and knowledge are characterized essentially in the same way; *i. e.*, in terms of their grammatical objects' forms. From this point of view, the concept of propositional memory, along with other cognitive faculties, is surely characterized by appeal to English grammar.

In contrast, philosophers usually illuminate the concept of experiential memory by analogy with perception as when Broad calls the concept *perceptual memory*. Ayer notes, philosophers «who write about memory are generally inclined to treat it as though it were analogous to perception»[20]. Given the analogy, as Wollheim clearly does, the gerundival construction is naturally cited as a typical expression for experiential memory. In English, perceptual verbs commonly take the gerundival construction (like in "I saw him walking"). Of course, Broad by no means tries to characterize the concept and distinguish it from other types of memories by appeal to the grammatical construction, or any other grammatical features of "remember". The same attitude seems to be shared by subsequent philosophers who by and large endorse a similar distinction. They all cite a sentence in the gerundival construction merely as an exemplar.

The concept of experiential memory, and its difference from propositional memory, is illustrated in light of an analogy with three critical perspectives to perception. Think of a perceptual experience, for instance, my seeing an apple.

[18] See N. Malcolm, *Knowledge and Certainty*, cit., p. 208, and S. Bernecker, *Memory: A Philosophical Study*, cit., pp. 17-18.
[19] I defend the knowledge retention view elsewhere. See S. Sakuragi, *Propositional Memory and Knowledge*, «Logos & Episteme», 4-1, 2013, pp. 69-83.
[20] A. J. Ayer, *The Problem of Knowledge*, Middlessex 1956. p. 134.

The *object* of my experience is the apple in front of me. The *mode of presentation* is visual, or 'seeing' as it is given to myself. Its *representational content* is the way in which the apple is presented to my consciousness. Likewise, propositional and experiential memories have different (a) objects, (b) modes of presentation, and (c) representational contents.

(a) Object

The object of propositional memory is a fact, or true proposition. Meanwhile, the object of experiential memory varies widely. Objects of some types of experiential memories are things, as when I remember someone's face. Other types of experiential memories are of events, as when I remember an event like the World Cup 2018. In either case, objects of experiential memories are particulars.

(b) Mode of presentation

When one occurrently entertains a memory of either type, its mode of presentation is typically memorial[21]. Namely, it appears to him that he is recalling something. In addition, such a mode of presentation reflects memory's derivative nature; *i. e.*, occurrent memory usually appears to its subject as something originates in his own past. Although there are cases in which one is not aware of recalling something, those scenarios are legitimately considered as atypical or even pathological.

The two types of memories are presented differently in their canonical forms. Propositional memories are typically presented as what we have known. Experiential memories, on the other hand, appear as memories of our own past experience as they were experienced; namely, with the original mode of presentation. Hence, when one experientially remembers an apple, it appears to him that he is recalling his past visual experience of the apple as if he used to see the apple[22]. To express this specific mode of presentation, in English, we may typically appeal to the gerundival construction; namely, we say, "he remembers *seeing* the apple," instead of "he remembers the apple".

(c) Representational Content

The representational content of propositional memory is that of its corresponding propositional knowledge, *i. e.*, propositional content. For instance, the representational content of my remembering that the World Cup 2018 was a success is the proposition that the World Cup 2018 was a success.

What I experientially remember is my past experience of doing something, rather than the object of past experience itself. In remembering seeing an apple, what is present in my mind is not the apple, but my seeing it. In the case of

[21] See M. Rowlands, *Memory and The Self: Phenomenology, Science and Autobiography*, New York 2017, pp. 48-49.
[22] Thus, it is simply unintelligible to say that I remember seeing an apple, but I do not at all remember what it was like. In such a case, I should rather say that I remember *that* I saw an apple. See, for instance, *ibid.*, p. 44.

experiential memory, however, its representational content is a little more complex than and significantly different from that of the original experience. To perceive an object is to have a certain conscious (imagistic or else) experience of the object. On the other hand, for an obvious reason, the representational content of experiential memory cannot be identical to the original perceptual experience. Otherwise, pieces of memory may appear as vividly and lively as its original perceptual experience did.

Again, what distinguishes the representational content of memory from that of perception is its derivative nature. The representational content of experiential memory is the current conscious experience whose salient features typically have been retained from the original experience of its object although they are not exactly the same.

How deviant remembered content may be from the original experience is a matter of degree. Sometimes our experiential memory decays, and thereby, we can hardly tell how the original experience exactly was. The more deviant the content of current conscious experience is from the original, the less convincing it is to grant the subject an experiential memory. Think of someone whose representation of a past event he attended was totally inaccurate. He saw two red apples, and later feels as if he remembers the experience in entertaining an visual image of three green grapes. He surely does not remember seeing two red apples. Does he remember seeing fruit? I'm inclined to say no. Given that the representational content retains no relevant features from the original at all, we refrain from saying that he remembers seeing fruit.

This is not to say that the subject retains no relevant memory, however. He might have relevant propositional memories; *e. g.*, he remembers that he saw some fruit[23]. Moreover, some of such inaccurate representation of the past episode may be taken to constitute an episodic memory; namely, he remembers *the event of* seeing fruit[24]. Following Wollheim, nevertheless, I claim that some of such episodic memories do not count as experiential memories even though many of them are boarder line cases[25].

Now, we can see what intuition is behind the alleged analogy to the Russellian distinction. The concept of experiential memory, and thereby its difference from propositional memory, is primarily to illuminate its representational contents, rather than its objects. The content of experiential memory of V-ing and that

[23] Whether he holds this particular propositional memory depends upon his epistemic situation. See A. Bryne, *Recollection, perception, imagination*, «Philosophical Studies», 148, 2010, pp. 21. I indebted to an anonymous reviewer for this remark.
[24] This may be true of perspective switching cases. See M. Rowlands, *Memory and The Self*, cit., pp. 45, and also his *The Remembered: Understanding the Content of Episodic Memory*. *New Directions in the Philosophy of Memory*, ed. by K. Michaelian *et al.*, New York 2018, pp. 282-283.
[25] R. Wollheim, *The Thread of Life*, cit., p. 105. I would like to note here that Christopher McCarroll argues against this view. I cannot offer a defense for the view here, although I fully recognize the need for it.

of perceptual experience in V-ing belong to the same family, if not identical[26]. In English, whatever verb is at stake, perceptual content is expressed in the gerundival form if not taking a direct object or noun phrase, whereas propositional content is typically expressed in the that-clause construction. To this extent, the two memory concepts reflect the grammatical features of "remember," and thereby the distinction is referred to in terms of English grammar. However, it is a mere coincidence that they are grammatically distinguished in English, as I will discuss in the next section.

5. Propositional Content

A challenge to the grammatical taxonomy still remains. The other philosophical concept is usually characterized by appeal to English grammar; *i. e.*, "remember" with the that-clause construction. Werning and Cheng would not be satisfied by the concept of propositional memory thus characterized[27].

As I suggested above, the concept of propositional memory is not characterized by a grammatical feature of "remember" alone. Perhaps, its primary motivation lies in the knowledge retention view; *i. e.*, propositional memory is nothing but retained propositional knowledge. Or, even those who reject that view would not disregard a certain relation between one's propositional memory that *p* and his believing that *p*, or mere thought that *p*. Thus, it is not only an analogy with propositional knowledge, but also a family of English cognitive verbs whose typical usages are characterized by the that-clause construction.

The concept of propositional memory grammatically so characterized enables us to illuminate the pivotal role the memory plays in our cognitive lives. I *learned that* the Battle of Hastings happened in 1066 and still *believes* so. Hence, when I am asked when the Battle of Hastings happened, I immediately *answer that* it happened in 1066. This is, of course, thanks to the relation between propositional memory and many other cognitive functions in virtue of sharing the same representational content.

In English, the that-clause construction reflects such a relation among cognitive functions. However, the concepts of knowledge, belief and many other cognitions with propositional content are clearly not unique to English. We seem to have good reason to believe that natural languages commonly have expressions for those human cognitive functions. Do they usually distinguish the propositional type in those cognitions – propositional knowledge, belief, and else – from other types? The answer seems to be positive. Propositional content of knowledge, belief and else from other types as practical ones are commonly distinguished in languages.

[26] About the relation between experiential memory and its corresponding perception, see Bryne, *Recollection, perception, imagination*, pp. 18-19. I am indebted to an anonymous referee for this remark.
[27] M. Werning and S. Cheng, *Taxonomy and Unity of Memory*, cit., p. 9.

Of course, the concepts are not expressed in the same manner. After all, ways of complementation vary among different languages. Even in English, different cognitive verbs take different systems. "Remember" occupies a relatively unique position even in English to the effect that it takes three, at least, types of grammatical objects expressing different concepts respectively. For example, "know" and "remember" both take a that-clause to express the propositional types, but only "remember" allows the gerundival construction[28]. This doesn't imply, however, that English has no expression for the concept of knowledge with perceptual content. Perceptual knowledge may be expressed in different terms, as "perceive that" or other perceptual verbs taking the that-clause construction[29]. Given the uniqueness, as Werning and Cheng plausibly remark, it is very unlikely that other languages are equipped with the same, or even an analogous, grammatical apparatus for the memory concepts.

Still, we can clearly distinguish the two memory concepts in other natural languages. For example, we may cite Japanese as an exemplary case of a different system.

"Koto" and "no" are typical complementizers accompanied by cognitive verbs in Japanese. Some perceptual verbs in Japanese, "miru" (to *see* in Japanese) and "kanjiru" (to *feel*) for instance, are known to take only "no," and other verbs such as "kangaeru" (to *think*) and "hanasu" (to *tell*) only take "koto." Meanwhile, "shiru" (to *learn*) takes both "koto" and "no"[30]. Likewise, "oboeteiru" and "omoidasu" – the two most common Japanese memory verbs – take both complementizers with no clear difference in meaning. Some linguists claim that "no" marks perceptual content[31]. As I argued elsewhere, however, a more compelling interpretation of "koto" and "no" accompanied by Japanese memory verbs is: these expressions are ambiguous between propositional and experiential memories[32]. Thus, as long as a case of one's propositional memory is described in Japanese, it is usually taken to coincide with his corresponding experiential memory.

Nonetheless, there is a case in which one remembers that he did something without remembering doing so. Think of someone who is convinced by some reliable source that he saw an apple before[33]. He thus comes to know that he saw

[28] An anonymous referee calls my attention to M. G. F. Martin's discussion in his *Out of the Past: Episodic Recall as Retained Acquaintance*. *Time and Memory: Issues in Philosophy and Psychology*, ed. C. Hoerl and T. McCormack, Oxford 2001, p. 264.
[29] C. Ginet, *Knowledge, Perception, and Memory*, Dordrecht 1975, p. 119-120.
[30] See *Genndai Nihongo Bunpou* (Contemporary Japanese Grammar) 6, ed. Nihongo Kijutsu Bonpou Kenkyuukai ed., Tokyo 2008, pp. 18-21. Another complementizer accompanied by some of those verbs is "to," but I ignore the term here. See S. Kuno, *Nihon Bunpou Kenkyuu* (Studies in Japanese Grammar), Tokyo 1973, pp. 137-139.
[31] See, for instance, S. Kuno, *Nihon Bunpou Kenkyuu*, cit., pp. 140-141.
[32] See S. Sakuragi, *Memory in English and Japanese*, «Ronri Tetsugaku Kenkyuu» [The Journal for the Japanese Association for Logical Philosophy], 9, 2015, pp. 57-72.
[33] This is a modification of a scenario in which one knew and knows that p without remembering so. See, for instance, E. M. Zemach, *A Definition of Memory*, «Mind», 77, 1968, pp. 527-528.

an apple. As long as the knowledge is stored in his memory, he later remembers that he saw an apple.

We can unequivocally describe such a scenario even in Japanese without appealing to any grammatical apparatus. In Japanese, the two memory concepts are distinguished by using nominal expressions to mark its perceptual or experiential content, such as "kanji", (*feeling*) or "keiken" (*experience*). Thus, we may cite an experiential memory by using those Japanese nouns essentially just as (C) in Broad's list («I remember the feeling which I had when I last went to the dentist») does. On the other hand, there seems to be no ordinary Japanese expression which allows us to unequivocally refer to propositional memory. Hence, in Japanese, one's propositional memory alone may be cited by indicating the absence of any corresponding experiential memory.

In this way, Japanese memory verbs with sentential complements do not seem to express the same concept as "remember" with the that-clause construction does. While the concepts of propositional and experiential memories are commonly expressed in natural languages, different languages have different systems for the two concepts. I see no reason why English should be a norm, and Japanese be an exception. Then, it becomes less clear why the concept of experiential memory alone is held vulnerable to the attack against its grammatical characterization in English.

I do not see many philosophers willing to give up the concept of propositional memory for this reason, and thereby the apparently inseparable conceptual connection between a type of memory and propositional type cognitions. Then, how can one reject the concept of experiential memory characterized by appeal to the gerundival construction, but still embrace the concept of propositional memory so characterized without extending their argument to the that-clause construction?

After all, whether the two memory concepts are grammatically characterized is of no importance to the philosophers' interest. If we are to characterize the concepts of propositional and experiential memories in English, an appeal to different grammatical objects is handy. The two concepts should be characterized and distinguished otherwise in another language, and thus, the two memory types are recognized through linguistic expressions. In either way, we have reason to believe that the distinction between propositional and experiential memories is commonly expressed in languages, so that they mark different representational contents, which enable us to illuminate how those two memories are related to other cognitive functions and to each other.

6. «Not Sharp» Scenarios

Let us move on to another challenge to the distinction. Sven Bernecker complains that criteria for both memories are of two different categories[34]. In

[34] S. Bernecker, *Memory: A Philosophical Study*, cit., pp. 17.

English, the representational content of a propositional memory is characterized by that-clause construction. Bernecker claims that experiential memory, on the other hand, should be characterized ultimately in terms of two features of its representational content. First, the content of experiential memory is accompanied by imagery. And second, the subject represents it as his own experience; in other words, the content is *de se*.

This classificatory difference in category invites a challenge, claims Bernecker, for both features appear to coincide in one and the same mental event.

> Consider my remembering that last summer I spent a few days in Rome. Is it a piece of experiential memory or does it belong to the class of propositional memory? To answer this question, proponents of the tripartite taxonomy will presumably enquire whether the content of the memory consists merely of a proposition or whether it also includes imagery and qualia. But the problem with this strategy is that the frequency and intensity of mental imagery varies greatly from one person to another[35].

No doubt some scenarios in which one remembers something appear to be ambiguous between two types of memories. In a certain scenario, we may be unable to determine which type of memory the subject has. If this is what Bernecker means by the two concepts being «not sharp», I concur.

Nonetheless, I do not believe that cases in which we cannot determine which type memory the subject has are due to the criterial difference between the two memory concepts. In my view, those scenarios are only epistemically ambiguous. The ambiguity is due to how we attribute different types of memories to others, or even ourselves.

I assume that some form of preservationism is correct; *i. e.*, one's memory is acquired at some point in the past and has been retained through time. And unless somehow manifested, a memory is held unconsciously. In this sense, having a memory is a potential state of mind. A proposal to capture this aspect of memory may be some sort of disposition theory, according to which "remembering" is a disposition which originates in its subject's past and has been retained and possibly manifested in a specific manner.

Objective attribution of such a potential state of mind is inevitably based upon indirect evidence. This may be a norm even when we attribute a *de se* propositional memory – a memory in the form of "I remember that I V-ed" or "I remember that I was V-ing." A *de se* propositional memory is canonically manifested by an occurrent thought with propositional content that *I V-ed* or *I was V-ing*. Nonetheless, it is not frequent that we entertain propositional thoughts about our own past conducts in such a manner. While remembering that I read *Moby-Dick*, I rarely entertain the thought that I read Moby-Dick.

[35] S. Bernecker, *Memory: A Philosophical Study*, cit., p. 16.

I simply feel familiar with the book title and its story when I hear them, for example[36].

Of course, a *de se* propositional memory (my remembering that I V-ed) usually coincides with the corresponding experiential memory (my remembering V-ing). For, one and the same occurrent memory experience likely gives us evidence for attributing both propositional and experiential memories at the same time. Suppose I am entertaining a visual experience of an apple as I saw it in the past. What kind of memory do I have with regard to the apple? I remember *seeing an apple*. At the same time, I have good reason to attribute to myself a propositional memory with the corresponding content; namely, (I believe that) I remember that *I saw an apple*. Such a self-attribution is, *ceteris paribus*, taken to be well-grounded.

Notice here that I am taken to remember that I saw an apple without entertaining the thought that I saw an apple. In similar ways, attributions of propositional memories are usually not grounded on their canonical manifestations. They are based on less direct evidence, involving one's overall epistemic situation. Think of an exam question asking when the Battle of Hastings occurred. In circling one of the choices, "a. 1066," I occurrently think that this should be the correct answer. Given a certain epistemic background, I may be taken to remember that the Battle of Hastings occurred in 1066. The attribution is thus grounded on indirect evidence.

Experiential memories are typically attributed more straightforwardly. An experiential memory is usually manifested in its canonical form; namely, entertaining one's past experience, though somewhat less vividly, as it was experienced before. Unless such a canonical manifestation is recognized, we are reluctant to attribute an experiential memory to someone, or even ourselves.

In the passage quoted above, Bernecker suggests a worry about an empirical observation that some people represent less imagistic or even no imagistic content at all[37]. One with less or even no imagery may not represent his past experience as accurately as those with rich imagery do. To that extent, basing his experiential memory on good grounds may not be as easy, and thereby, it appears more ambiguous whether he has experiential memories. As long as he has such a potential, however, the man has an experiential memory even though its attribution may not be fully confirmed. Furthermore, those who have no imagestic experience have no experiential memory, as long as they have no original experience to be remembered. Nonetheless, the fact that some people lack any imagestic experience does not seem to constitute no more serious challenge to the concept of experiential memory than the fact that color blind people see no difference in colors constitutes a challenge to color concepts.

Compared to experiential memory, *de se* propositional memories are typically attributed on less optimal grounds. Sometimes we may say to ourselves,

[36] B. Russell, *The Analysis of Mind*, repr. Mineola 2005 (first ed. 1921), pp. 95-96.
[37] S. Bernecker, *Memory: A Philosophical Study*, cit., p. 16.

"Now I remember that the Battle of Hastings occurred in 1066"[38]. However, such an occurrent event of propositional memory is definitely not frequent. Common practice is more ambiguous. Think of another exam asking the previous question with different choices. This time, I circle the correct answer, "a. in the late 11th century." Do I not remember then that the Battle of Hastings occurred in 1066? The answer seems to depend upon overall indirect evidence involving my relevant epistemic situation.

Thus, it is not precise to say that a «non-propositional representation can be remembered in propositional format and a propositional representation can be remembered in non-propositional format»[39]. The two types of memory usually coincide, and some of their attributions are not apparent. Yet, their conceptual distinction is sufficiently clear. When past experience crosses our minds as if it was our own, it is usually taken to constitute sufficient grounds for an experiential memory of us. The same event, *ceteris paribus*, also constitutes sufficient, though indirect, grounds for a *de se* propositional memory with the corresponding content. On the other hand, one's evidence for a *de se* propositional memory is often less direct, or may even be unconvincing, absent its corresponding experiential memory.

7. Experience and its Residue

Bernecker would not be satisfied by my proposal. He clearly thinks that representational contents of some experiential memories are propositional. According to him, it is «the counterintuitive consequence that, strictly speaking, I cannot experientially remember *that p*»[40]. I can concede with him in this particular regard. My response, however, is: even so, my experiential memory and the corresponding *de se* propositional memory are necessarily different, since the former is presented in a specific mode of presentation.

Let us think of my remembering seeing an apple. According to an antagonist, my memory may have the propositional content that I saw an apple. Then, what is my memory's mode of presentation? As we saw, in the case of experiential memory, its mode of presentation is not only memorial, but also with a *specific* mode of presentation as it was originally given. We remember *seeing* an apple because the original experience was visual. Now, how does the experiential memory that I saw an apple appear as originally entertained? It cannot appear as a memory of my past visual experience, of course. I didn't have a visual experience of my seeing an apple. I had a visual experience of the apple. Indeed, it doesn't make sense to say that I remember *seeing* the experience that I saw an apple.

One might bite the bullet and claim that the representational content of such experiential memory is simply a *de se* proposition (though, I don't believe

[38] See S. Munsat, *The Concept of Memory*, New York 1966, p. 41.
[39] S. Bernecker, *Memory: A Philosophical Study*, cit., p. 22.
[40] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

that Bernecker would take this option). Namely, experiential memory is a type of propositional memory, and thereby, the distinction between the two types is reduced to difference in propositional content. Propositional memory is a memory whose propositional content is not *de se*. Thus, the distinction between a *de se* propositional memory and experiential memory collapses.

The present proposal cannot explain a case of a *de se* propositional memory without experiential memory. Again, think of someone who remembers that he saw an apple absent any phenomenal content of the original visual experience. His memory cannot be experiential given its lack of the original mode of presentation, seeing. Nonetheless, its representational content must be *de se*, and thus, the proposal cannot claim that it is a case of propositional memory.

For the same reason, the proposal fails to explain a case of experiential memory without its corresponding *de se* propositional memory. Suppose a visual image of an apple crosses one's mind[41]. Indeed, it is represented to him as if he was seeing it. Yet, he is convinced that he didn't see an apple. For, as long as he can tell, he is naturally blind. Thus, he does not remember that he saw an apple. In fact, he lost his eyesight early in his infancy. He actually saw the apple when he was a baby, and the visual image has been stored in his mind. Surprisingly enough, the image now comes to the surface of his consciousness. A plausible explanation of such a scenario is: the subject has an experiential memory of seeing an apple, but lacks a *de se* propositional memory that he saw an apple. If this is correct, regardless of whether experiential memory has propositional content or not, a *de se* propositional memory and experiential memory with the corresponding content should remain distinct.

My *de se* propositional memory that I saw an apple usually holds even after I can no longer entertain a visual experience of the apple. Even after phenomenal content of the original experience is totally lost, its residue is left[42]. Experiential memory is retained mostly along with its relevant propositional memories. As time passes, phenomenal content of the experiential memory decays, and at some point, no longer counts as experiential. Yet, even after the shadow of the original experience is completely gone, the propositional content may still hold in our mind. For, we still hold many beliefs or relevant propositional attitudes which give us indirect evidence for attributing the propositional memory. Thus, the two philosophical concepts, in distinguishing *de se* propositional memory from experiential memory, allow us to illustrate how memory is lost and retained, and what role it plays in our cognitive lives.

Now, to what extent an experiential memory holds? The answer seems to be vague. Again, the vague nature of the concept of experiential memory doesn't underpin the conceptual ambiguity between experiential memory and propositional memory.

[41] See C. B. Martin and M. Deutscher, *Remembering*, «The Philosophical Review», 75, 1966, pp. 167-168.
[42] See M. Rowlands, *Memory and The Self: Phenomenology, Science, and Autobiography*, cit., ch. 3.

8. Conclusive Remarks

I have argued for the claim that the distinction between propositional memory and experiential memory is neither grammatical nor ambiguous. The two philosophical concepts of memory are distinguished essentially in light of their representational contents and modes of presentation. The two memory concepts are usually distinguished in natural languages, and thus, they allow us to explain relations to each other and other cognitive functions.

I haven't discussed an important question: are those two declarative memories exhaustive? Indeed, Bernecker's distinction between propositional and non-propositional memories is intended to be sharp *and* exhaustive. I'm inclined to say that they are, but such a position needs a further, substantial inquiry.

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