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Remembering Objects

Conscious recollection, of the kind characterised by sensory mental imagery, is often thought to involve 'episodically' recalling experienced events in one's personal past. One might wonder whether this overlooks distinctive ways in which we sometimes recall ordinary, persisting objects. Of course, one can recall an object by remembering an event in which one encountered it. But are there acts of recall which are distinctively *objectual* in that they are not about objects in this mediated way (i.e., by way of being about events in which they featured)? This question has broad implications, not least for understanding the nature and role of imagery in remembering, the requirements of memory-based singular thought about objects, and the sense in which remembering involves 'mental time travel' through which one 'relives' past events.

In this paper, I argue that we sometimes do recall objects from our past without remembering events in which they featured. The positive view of such cases I go on to propose draws on a wide body of empirical work in its support and accommodates a more nuanced picture of the role of imagery in remembering. In a slogan: remembering might essentially involve a kind of 're-experiencing', but it need not involve 'reliving'.

1 Introduction

What instances of conscious recollection enable one to have singular thoughts about ordinary material objects or persons from one's past? Though not always explicitly stated, it has been generally assumed that "[m]emory demonstratives are made available by memory of events" (Campbell 2002: 177). To recall such an object, in that distinctive way characterised by recollective sensory mental imagery ('experiential recall'), one must recall some event(s) in which it featured. As Broad put it: "I remember *him* only in so far as I remember *events* in which he was concerned" (1925: 224). If you are to experientially recall your grandfather, for instance, in such a way as to accompany memory-based singular thoughts about him, you must do so by experientially recalling some past perceptual encounter(s) of him.

It is natural to wonder whether this overlooks the possibility of experientially remembering an object other than through the recall of events in which it featured. Why must object remembering go via the recall of some other non-propositional entity? What is so special about events? This paper challenges a widespread assumption which we can call *eventism*.¹

¹ I pass over the metaphysics of the object–event distinction here (see Casati and Varzi (2020) for a survey). Some are sceptical of any such distinction. But the point of *EVENTISM* is not that experiential recall is de facto about events, it is that in virtue of the kind of psychological activity it is, such recall is necessarily about events.

EVENTISM: For all ordinary objects x , in order that a subject S experientially recall x , S must experientially recall some past event(s) in which S encountered x .

Consider the following passage, in which Vladimir Nabokov unflatteringly recalls his childhood governess under the name 'Mademoiselle'.

Mademoiselle rolled into our existence in December 1905 when I was six and my brother five. There she is. I see so plainly her abundant dark hair, brushed up high and covertly graying; the three wrinkles on her austere forehead; her beetling brows; the steely eyes behind the black-rimmed pince-nez; that vestigial moustache; that blotchy complexion, which in moments of wrath develops an additional flush in the region of the third, and amplest, chin (Nabokov 2012: 136).

It is natural to say that while writing this description Nabokov was recalling Mademoiselle, and not thereby recalling any *event* involving her. Of course, there plausibly must have *been* events in his past in which he perceptually encountered Mademoiselle.² But it no more follows that what Nabokov recalls are those events than that when I recall that Yaoundé is the capital of Cameroon I am recalling the occasion on which I learned this. Or so I will be arguing.

We will see that there are theoretical reasons for supposing that EVENTISM is true (§5). For now, I just want to make clear that such reasons are needed. EVENTISM has no special claim over common sense or grammar. Yet it is often taken for granted. Broad (1925) describes remembering 'the late Master of Trinity' immediately before writing: "to remember a thing or person simply means to remember certain past events" (224).³ EVENTISM may largely have gone unquestioned because the distinctive issues raised by object remembering are apt to be overlooked where the memory literature's focus is personal identity (lives and their constituent events) or where it takes the psychological notion of episodic memory as its basis (see §1.1).

I will be arguing, against EVENTISM, that we sometimes do experientially recall objects without thereby recalling events from our past in which they featured. I will call these violations of EVENTISM *objectual* recollections, but for now I remain neutral on whether they are to be characterised as the immediate awareness of an object, as the entertaining of a singular

² While some accounts are compatible with denying that things remembered must have been previously encountered (Michaelian 2016: 118), I will be assuming that this is a requirement for dialectical purposes.

³ In Broad's case, this may simply follow from his conception of objects as events of a certain sort (1923: 393). Smith (1966: 53) concurs with Broad independently of such ontological considerations.

proposition with the object as a constituent, or otherwise.⁴ I will be arguing that reflection on the imagery in apparent cases of objectual recall (§2), and on empirical work (§3), provides strong grounds to deny EVENTISM. On the positive account I offer in §4, objectual recall involves activating knowledge of the remembered object's past perceptible qualities. I also explore some of the implications which the denial of EVENTISM has for our broader philosophical theorizing about memory. Throughout the paper, I use 'remember' or 'memory' to refer to a mental state, 'recall', 'remembering', or 'recollection' to a mental occurrence or process.

Before pressing ahead with the paper's argument, §1.1 provides some context and introduction, clarifying the current theoretical landscape and pointing to some features which may explain why objectual remembering has been largely overlooked.⁵

1.1 Experiential and episodic remembering

Many mental states carry information with past experience as its source. But not all enable what we can most generally call *experiential remembering*: the recall of things encountered in one's past in a phenomenally rich, imagistic, affective or sensory-like way. When in this sense I recall seeing a goldfinch yesterday, it is not the case that anything distinctively experiential about my act is a mere accompaniment, as it might be if I were to recall that the Battle of Hastings took place in 1066 while visualising cavalry charging across an anonymous field. Rather, summoning a visual impression of that flash of yellow in the bird's arced flight across the hedgerow may partly constitute my recall of that event. 'Experiential' here does not specify a kind of thing recalled (namely, a past experience) but rather a kind of recollective activity.⁶

The imagery of experiential recall is characteristically presented, on its face, as being somehow "from and about *my* past" (Klein 2018: 121). Though widely agreed to be important, this feature is notoriously difficult to characterise. Termed 'autonoesis' by Tulving (1985), it is sometimes glossed as a "feeling that one is reliving the circumstances from which that content was acquired" (Klein 2018: 121). Understood that way, however, experiential recall concerns events more or less by definition. This picture of what distinguishes experiential recall is

⁴ Note the contrast with 'objectual' as used by those who argue that there are irreducibly non-propositional attitudes, such as that of loving one's brother (see Grzankowski and Montague (2018) for references).

⁵ A notable exception is Bernecker (2010), whose grammatically based taxonomy explicitly marks out object memory. Unfortunately, Bernecker says little about this category and, perhaps because his taxonomy cuts across that adopted in the empirical literature, it has received little attention elsewhere. For reasons to be suspicious of grammatically based taxonomies of memory, see Werning and Cheng (2017).

⁶ Others have called these 'recollective memories' (Debus 2007), 'sensory memories' (Gregory 2018), 'personal memories' (Locke 1971), 'perceptual memories' (Malcolm 1963), *inter alia*. See Brewer (1986) for a review.

perhaps one reason the recent literature on memory takes its target to be the “reliving [of] past autobiographical episodes as if one travelled back to them mentally and went through them anew in the form of phenomenally rich mental images” (Perrin and Rousset 2014: 291–2).

More pertinently, much of the accelerated philosophical progress on memory is due to an increased sensitivity to cognitive psychology, and it is perhaps principally for this reason that the flourishing philosophical literature has taken experiential remembering and the recall of specific events in one’s past as more or less synonymous. In psychology, ‘episodic memory’ (Tulving 1972) is used variously to refer to a hypothetical system which encodes, stores, and retrieves memories of past episodes, to such representations themselves, and to the distinctive recollective experiences one has upon their retrieval. It is contrasted, at the declarative level, with ‘semantic’ memory—“the retrieval of general conceptual knowledge divested of a specific spatiotemporal context” (Irish and Piguet 2013: 1)). Though it would be understandable for the recall of specific episodes to be philosophers’ paradigm case, it is sometimes underappreciated that empirical investigations, perhaps in an operationalist spirit, take such temporal specificity to be a *criterion*. Episodic recall concerns “a personally experienced past event from a particular place and time”; “retrieval of a specific context is essential” (Barry and Maguire 2019: 128–9).

Episodic memory inherently has a one-shot-learning character, while the semanticization of memories involves the synthesis of information from across multiple experiences (Cheng 2013: 7).

Although Tulving argues for as many as 28 differences between the [episodic and semantic] systems, all but one seems secondary. The primary difference is that episodic memory represents temporally and spatially localized events, while semantic memory represents [...] generic information (Hintzman 1984: 241).

...the fundamental feature of episodic memory: the fact that episodic memories are memories about specific past events (McCormack 2001: 287).

...an *episodic* memory has the phenomenal characteristic of referring to something that happened once at a specific time and place (Nelson 1993: 7).

From an empirical point of view, ‘one-off’ cases offer a clear window onto a phenomenon (‘episodic memory’) being identified in part by an informational contrast with

factual knowledge abstracted from its context of acquisition.⁷ From the perspective of philosophy of mind, however, construing experiential recall as essentially concerned with episodes would be distortive. Our interest is in experiential recall as a conscious, intentional occurrence, about which we can ask such questions as: *what are its intentional objects; in what ways is it phenomenologically distinctive; how does it afford a source of knowledge?* In the context of these projects, there is no reason to focus on ‘one-shot’ cases, and good reason to expect doing so would blind us to cases where otherwise appealing claims can be seen as incorrect.

Precisely this accusation has recently been made by Andonovski (2020). Many of our recollective experiences involve the recall of *general, extended, or repeated* events (Brewer 1986). When asked to freely recall events from their summer, only 21% of Barsalou’s (1988) participants described single events lasting less than a day (200). 41% of statements expressed the recall of general or extended events (e.g., ‘I watched a lot of TV’; ‘I took a trip to Italy’). Yet the non-episodic character of such recollections is consistent with substantial overlap with episodic recall. Drawing on a range of considerations, some of which will be described later in this paper, Andonovski (2020) argues that neglect of non-episodic event recall has hindered philosophical theorising.⁸ We should, for many purposes, consider non-episodic cases of remembering as being of a piece with the paradigm, episodic cases.

In the following two sections, I argue that there are other neglected instances of experiential recall which reward philosophical attention: it is sometimes inaccurate to characterise experiential recollections as being about events—even general or repeated events—as opposed to things which *persist across* events. Though often overlooked by the post-Tulving tradition, Don Locke (1971) defined experiential remembering as being concerned not only with events but “particular items—people, places, things [...] that we have personally experienced” (70). He suggested that it “consists in bringing some previously experienced thing to mind” and “going over what it was like, [...] where the ability to do this depends on our having experienced it” (76). Against EVENTISM, I’ll essentially be vindicating this Lockean starting point.

Now, experiential recollection is itself an event, with conscious imagery that often unfolds over a period. It might therefore seem that all such recall must represent events. But this line of thought blurs the distinction between *acts* of remembering and their *contents*. Perceptual experiences, albeit events, intentionally relate perceivers to objects and perhaps to property instances as well as to events. Still, one might nevertheless insist that experiential

⁷ I do not mean to suggest that the episodic–semantic distinction is commonly thought to be informational in character (as in Tulving (1972)). But even investigators who take it to be largely phenomenological in character intend to track it, third-personally, via an informational contrast.

⁸ Some have explicitly discussed non-episodic event recall (Campbell 2002: 177; Hoerl 2014: 370–1), but Andonovski (2020) is right that various details are not fully worked out.

remembering is importantly different from perceiving: the former is necessarily *about experiences* in one's past, and since experiences are themselves events of a sort, experiential recall is necessarily about events. On this picture, instances of experiential recall are accurate only if they are *authentic*, i.e. only if they are accurate with respect to one's original experience. Since what is remembered is a past experience, there is no room on this picture for instances of experiential recall which are inauthentic but *true*, i.e. which are accurate with respect to the remembered thing but not with respect to one's original experience of it.⁹

Whether such a picture of experiential remembering can be maintained in general will be examined later (§5). Until then, allow me to foreground a no less intuitive starting point: while we surely do sometimes recall experiences, such as bodily sensations (itches and pains), the objects of experiential recall are as heterogeneous as those of perception. For one thing, this offers a more straightforward account of remembering 'from the outside' (Nigro and Neisser 1983): *what* is recalled is identical to what one could recall 'from the inside'—namely, a worldly scene or event—albeit under a different guise or mode of presentation (McCarroll 2018: 150ff).¹⁰ Viewed this way, the burden of argument would in fact seem to lie with the proponents of *EVENTISM*, for it is they who place a restriction on the contents of remembering. Yet if this seems like the correct starting point to some, it has often been overlooked. So, in §2, I start by examining introspective grounds for thinking objectual remembering is a coherent and perhaps common occurrence. These considerations harmonise with a considerable body of work in psychology (§3). And this harmony, I argue, provides a compelling abductive argument against *EVENTISM*. §4 offers a positive philosophical account of what objectual remembering consists in, before §5 undermines some apparent considerations in favour of *EVENTISM*. My hope is that drawing attention to objectual remembering will enable us to develop a more well-rounded conception of what it is, in general, to experientially remember.

2 Objectual remembering and its imagery

In what follows, I speak of objectual *remembering* or *recall* rather than *memories* to emphasise neutrality about what kind of representations might enable such acts of recall. It is unnecessary

⁹ The distinction between authenticity and truth is due to Bernecker (2010), who suggests both are required for successful recall. Though it has been influential, the details of the distinction require some precisification.

¹⁰ A nice example of remembering from the outside is given by McCarroll: "I am seated on a rope swing, dangling from the branches of a large but anonymous tree. [...] Suddenly I lose my grip, just as the swing reaches its forward apex. I fall off, landing on my back. [...] I see myself, as if from behind, run down the hill in panic" (2018: 1–2). Since it is possible to 'switch' perspective during retrieval (Rice and Rubin 2009), I avoid talk of 'observer' and 'field' *memories*.

to posit *sui generis* object representations or ‘mental files’ as vehicles whose retrieval affords objectual recall. Cognitive architecture may take little notice of any ontological distinction between events and objects. Relatedly, I take no stance on whether objectual recall is at some level a product of an ‘episodic construction system’. Nor am I claiming objectual recall is a cognitive ‘natural kind’. It is compatible with everything said here that there is only one salient *kind* of remembering—experiential remembering—and that it is simply certain instances of this kind which have been overlooked.

It will help to supplement the case lifted from Nabokov (§1) with a case of my own. On its face, it suggests it is possible to recall an object without being so much as capable of recalling events from one’s past involving it. In the abstract, I take it, that possibility is rather intuitive. Sometimes one finds oneself recalling a person, or a face, while being unable to recall (perhaps even if appropriately cued) any event from one’s past in which they featured. Sometimes there is at least some spatial context one represents the recalled person as occupying. But this is not always the case. It can happen that what one represents is not a spatial scene in which oneself is situated, viewing the person from some point of view. One is more or less just sensorily presented with the visual appearance of the person recalled.

Case W. I can recall an acquaintance from my childhood. I do not remember her name, so let’s use W (‘Whatshername’) to refer to her. I believe we attended the same primary (elementary) school, so there must have been lots of occasions on which I did encounter W. But when I recall W, all I have is more or less only a vague impression of a face, brown eyes, freckles, red hair, and of a distinctively hoarse voice. I cannot recall any events in my past involving W whatsoever.

To reiterate, there is nothing particularly remarkable about this case, and I hope its general shape is broadly familiar to, or—better—reconstructible for, the reader. W will, of course, be very different today. I am in no position to recognize W. Whatever I have retained in memory enables me to recall W as the child she once was. But there is no context to this recollection; no place or particular time(s) it represents. So might it be that, in engaging in this activity of remembering people and objects, particularly from the remote past, one is doing just that—recalling the thing in abstraction from any past events in which one encountered it?

Debus (2007) suggests something sufficiently like this that it deserves mentioning. She claims that one can experientially recall (‘R-remember’, in her terminology) an object (176) and do so “*without* being aware of a past perceptual experience of [it]” (174). Recall that **EVENTISM** is the thesis that experientially remembering an ordinary material object entails experientially

remembering an event in which one perceptually encountered it. So we may take *EVENTISM* to be Debus's target.¹¹ In support of her above claim, Debus offers the following case as an example:

on a recent visit to a museum, Mary [...] spent quite a while looking at a picture by Mondrian. [...] Mary presently R-remembers the picture and the spatial organization of its colours and shapes. She does not R-remember the picture in a spatially involved way, that is, her R-memory does not, for example, present the picture 'an arm's length in front, slightly to the left', nor does she R-remember the picture at a determinate location. Rather, the R-memory presents the picture at no particular location at all (2007: 181).

The visual imagery of Mary's recollection will, of course, have certain spatial and perspectival characteristics. It will present the painting as oriented in some way, so that the yellow rectangle is at the bottom and the red square at the top, say. In general, if visual imagery for an object is to be accurate then it will need to represent some of the object's spatial properties. Debus's point, however, is that to recall an event of *perceiving* an object is to recall it "in a spatially involved way and at a determinate location" (2007: 182). And since Mary is introspectively aware that she is not recalling the painting in these ways, it follows that she is not remembering any event of perceiving it. And it therefore follows that *EVENTISM* is false: experientially recalling an object does not entail recalling an event in which one perceptually encountered it.

Insofar as Debus is to be read as arguing against *EVENTISM*, everything rests on what it means to suggest that Mary (is introspectively aware that she) does not recall the painting 'in a spatially involved way' or 'at a determinate location'. Defining the former suggestion, Debus tells us that spatially involved experiences require for their description the use of 'monadic spatial notions': one must say things like 'she perceives the painting as being to the left' rather than 'she perceives the painting as being to the left of herself' (2007: 179). So the idea would be that Mary's recollection is distinguished from the recall of an event in not requiring the use of such notions for its proper description. Concerning the latter suggestion, Debus claims that

¹¹ Later, in §5, we'll examine a distinct, narrower thesis—which may be used in support for *EVENTISM*—alleging that to experientially recall something is to recall *an experience* of it. In the context of remembering objects, much of the substance of that thesis depends on how we choose to individuate perceptual experiences: indirect realists and naïve realists may both be inclined to assert it but will do so for very different reasons. In any case, since experiences are events, the thesis would appear to entail *EVENTISM*. And one might be inclined to think of *this* thesis as Debus's primary target. To maintain focus, however, I confine all such discussion to §5. For now, as suggested at the end of §1.1, we are to think of experiential remembering as an experiential, or imagistic, way of representing ordinary objects and events, not thereby a representation of *past experiences*.

Mary's recollection of the painting is distinguished from the recall of an event involving it by virtue of not representing it *as* located in some determinate place (2007: 180). Unfortunately, these crucial descriptions are not developed to any further degree of precision. While there are supposed to be imagistic features necessarily present in the recall of perceptually experienced events which are absent from some cases of object remembering, providing a convincing argument against *EVENTISM* requires clarifying both *what* the spatial-perspectival differences are and *why* these differences should be taken to imply a difference in what these recollections are about. I propose a particular way of clarifying these matters in the following sub-section.

2.1 Imagery and content in objectual remembering

According to Rubin and Umanath's (2015) influential discussion, whether a subject *recalls an event* (which is necessary but not sufficient for episodic recall) is, in part, a matter of whether they are 'constructing a scene' at the time of recall. Insofar as a variety of mental states may carry spatial information, a crucial difference between these states and event recollection is whether such information is used to achieve a certain form of imagery. Constructing a scene involves representing an "egocentric perspective from a specific spatial location", and one can achieve this in remembering "even if the egocentric view at recall is one never actually experienced" (2015: 4). In other words, event recall, whether 'from the inside' or 'from the outside', requires that the imagery of one's recollective experience present things from some point of view within an imaged scene. It requires that, at the time of recall, one be able to judge from where *within the recalled space* the presented perspective on the event is located. "[T]he act of constructing a scene forces a person to imagine himself or herself in one particular location [...] even if it represents multiple encodings" (Rubin 2021).

So suppose one recalls giving an in-person conference talk 'from the outside'. The visual imagery necessarily presents this from some point of view, and spatial relations between things within the recalled scene and the point of view taken on that scene are also present in one's imagery. Since one is not remembering from the inside, these relations lack a certain kind of egocentric significance. But the point of view is still found within the space itself: it is at the back of the lecture theatre, or in the seat in which one witnessed the other talks. The recalled event is visualized from some more or less specific point of view within the scene itself, then, even if this point of view is not represented as having been one's own when the event occurred. The requirements on event recall which fall out of Rubin and Umanath's (2015) discussion not only serve as a clear expression of the importance placed on scene construction in the recent empirical literature, they also capture an insight in Debus's (2007) discussion. We can make

sense of these ideas by framing things as follows. At the most general level, experiential recall presents one with imagery representing things as having been some way or other. In entertaining the imagery, it seems to one that the world was once some corresponding way. But there are different ways in which such imagery can acquire significance, much like imagining a kitchen table and imagining a dog hidden from view beneath a kitchen table may involve one and the same mental image. Sometimes, and most paradigmatically, experiential recall involves its seeming that one “underwent sensory episodes in which things looked [...] or otherwise stood sensorily the ways that the memory’s accompanying recollective images show things as standing sensorily” (Gregory 2018: 30). Other times, however, for instance when one recalls past events from the outside, the recollective imagery plays a more complex and indirect role. In those cases, such imagery represents “merely that a portion of the world was once certain sensorily-characterized ways” (Gregory 2018: 30); not that those ways conform to the very ways in which oneself experienced the event. In the example just given, where one recalls delivering a conference talk from the outside, one’s visual imagery necessarily presents this from some point of view, but this point of view is simply a way for one to visualise the action (McCarroll 2018: 117). To quote Velleman (who is concerned with a distinction between visualization and imagined seeing), the imagery “represents objects as they would appear to a viewer, if one were present, but it doesn’t represent them as so appearing to anyone” (1996: 50). We might put this by saying that the imaged point of view is *unoccupied* (McCarroll 2016: 106–116). Still, the point of view is one which looks out from some location within the scene.

These different recollective projects may not be exclusive, and the subject may not always be aware or confident exactly how she is representing things as having been in undergoing the relevant recollective experience, i.e. whether she is remembering from some embodied point of view within the scene, authentically, or whether she is remembering the scene from some unoccupied point of view. But although these different projects are not always transparent to the subject, or voluntary, that there are these different ways for imagery to represent the past in experiential recall is difficult to deny.¹²

To summarise, recollective imagery plays a complex, multi-dimensional role. There is potential for divorce between the way things are sensorily *presented* as having *looked/sounded* and the way things are *represented* as having *been* by means of visual/auditory imagery. In spite of the divorce illustrated by remembering from the outside, we are of course typically aware of what we are recalling and of whether we are doing so from the inside/outside.

¹² For discussion of whether remembering from the outside is genuine remembering, see Debus (2007), McCarroll (2018), and Sutton (2010). Such forms are widely accepted in the empirical literature.

With this background in place, we can begin to appreciate the stark contrast with objectual recall. In objectual remembering there is no question of judging *where* a recalled or adopted point of view is located in egocentric terms with respect to what is being recalled, contra Rubin and Umanath's (2015) requirement on event recall. Nabokov does not image *a scene* within which Mademoiselle is spatially related to a point of view he now either recalls or adopts. While Nabokov remembers Mademoiselle as having looked some way, he is not remembering her as having looked that way *to something in some place*. And this feature violates Rubin and Umanath's requirement; namely, that it must involve an "egocentric perspective from a specific spatial location" (2015: 4). As Warren and Carmichael suggested, remembering an object to which one has had repeated exposure seems to involve a "composite image" which "shows the object without any definite location in time and space and with no fixed surroundings or background" (1930: 217). Since the cases of objectual remembering described above do not involve either the recall or adoption of a point of view within a scene also occupied by the recalled object, they apparently do not afford awareness of events. And since they do afford awareness of objects from one's past, *EVENTISM* is apparently false.

It may be replied that visual imagery of an ordinary object necessarily requires assuming some *way of viewing* it (e.g., from several feet away, with the object face-on). This may be right (though see Sartre (2004: 125)), but what is crucial is that this way of viewing the object need not be given by its representation as a constituent of some larger scene, and so nor need it involve a point of view within some such scene. We can accept that the imagistic representation of an object's past appearance requires some approximate specification of a way of viewing it while denying that this commits one to representing the object *as* embedded within a larger, point-of-view-containing scene. The difference here is prior to any distinction between occupied and unoccupied points of view, or between remembering from the inside and from the outside. What one imagistically represents is the object's past appearance as seen from such-and-such a perspective. It does not follow that one is imagistically representing *a scene* within which both the object and a point of view on it can be found. As Williams put it in the case of imagining:

even if [...] what is visualised is presented as it were from a perceptual point of view, there can be no reason at all for insisting that the point of view is of one *within the world of what is visualised* (1973: 37; emphasis added).

In remembering an *event*, one's visual imagery presents things from a point of view which looks out from a location within the scene. (In the case of repeated events, of course, this may not

be associated with any sense of temporal specificity. And in the case of remembering from the outside, the point of view need not be represented as occupied.) As Rubin and Umanath (2015) put it, the event recalled “must be viewed from a particular seat”, and while “[t]he seat need not be on the stage” (that is, while one may remember it from the outside), “it must be in the theatre” (4). By contrast, in recollective experiences such as those illustrated by Nabokov (§1) and I (Case W), *there is no wider scene representing a place of encounter within which both the recalled object and a point of view on that object sit in some spatial relation*. So it is true that the imagistic representation of an object’s appearance requires some approximate specification of a way of viewing it, but this way of viewing a recalled object need not be given by one’s recall of a scene. Nabokov recalls the past *look* of Mademoiselle’s face, as viewed from the front, but not any occasion(s) of *seeing* her face just so.¹³

These broadly introspective considerations do not by themselves provide overwhelming considerations against EVENTISM. But they at least begin to cast some doubt and perhaps even shift the burden of argument. §3 will strengthen my case by illustrating the harmony between empirical work and the foregoing interpretations of Case W and Nabokov’s Mademoiselle.

3 Objectual remembering: A view from cognitive psychology

De Brigard (2018) summarizes a number of studies suggesting that the experience of nostalgia does not always involve episodic recollection. In one of Wildschut et al.’s (2006) studies, the *majority* of nostalgic experiences concerned persons. De Brigard remarks,

it is odd that researchers keep insisting that nostalgia is always associated with a specific episodic autobiographical memory. The reason, I believe, has more to do with experimental methodology than with psychological reality (2018: 160).

Something similar is true in the general case of experiential remembering. For Tulving (1993: 67), and much of the literature that has followed step, memories of objects free of their spatiotemporal contexts are semantic. Yet this allocation is alleviates the burden of saying anything positive, and insofar as ‘semantic memories’ are taken to be “not vividly recollected”

¹³ Though this section does not rest on empirical considerations, there is strong evidence that object mental imagery and spatial mental imagery recruit functionally independent systems of representation (Farah et al. 1988; Kozhevnikov et al. 2005). It is also interesting that patients with hippocampal damage who are therefore unable to engage in the scene construction needed for episodic recall and imagining are nonetheless “able to vividly imagine single acontextual objects” (Mullally and Maguire 2014: 222).

but “rather ‘known’” (Levine et al. 2004: 1634), it may seem to imply that experiential recall necessarily involves the recollection of episodes—a view even stronger than *EVENTISM*.

Nonetheless, support for the occurrence of objectual remembering can be recovered from the psychological literature. In this section I appeal to considerations of two sorts. The first concerns the *retrieval* stage of experiential recall. The second concerns the *consolidation* stage in the lifecycle of memories and the gradual process of *semanticization*. These not only provide some support for the actual occurrence of objectual recall, they help point us in the direction of a positive account (§4).

First, then, the cases described in §2 often seem to be what psychologists call *visual memories*: long-term “memory representations that maintain information about the perceptual properties of viewed stimuli” (Hollingworth and Luck 2008: 4). It is well known that we have a vast capacity for visual long-term memories (see Schurgin (2018) for a survey). However, the retrieval of visual memories can accompany recollective experiences with a generic or blended character. As Palmeri and Tarr put it, sometimes

a number of matching memories [...] are combined together [...] during the act of memory retrieval [...]. What is common between these memories [...] [are] those visual properties present across many instances stored in memory (2008: 185).

This notion of memories ‘blended’ at the stage of retrieval has a long history of discussion (see Hintzman (1986)). Even if this is construed as a subpersonal process, it is not as if we are bound to mistakenly believe its products to be memories of specific episodes (though there are interesting questions about how we reliably make such detections). And as the Nabokov passage (§1) suggests, it is often faithful to the phenomenology of remembering that the imagery entertained does not purport to concern any particular event. It is perhaps in this sense, as a retrieval-stage phenomenon, that Nabokov objectually recalls Mademoiselle. Visual object imagery is known to facilitate the recall of events (Vannucci et al. 2016), and so Nabokov may have seamlessly gone on to recall events involving her. But what Nabokov recalls as he writes that very passage is some common *constituent(s) of events*—Mademoiselle’s visible properties, generalised from across the many events in which she was encountered.

Second, it is also widely held that the typical lifecycle of memory traces involves continuous transformation and, over time, *schematization* or *semanticization* (Cermak 1984). ‘Consolidation’ refers to a family of ongoing dynamic and generative processes. Part of their role is to extract general representations and knowledge from episodic memories and to facilitate their accessibility. It is often suggested that transitional forms of representation exist

along a *continuum* of specificity, from the most specific, recent episodes to the most general items of factual knowledge (Cabeza and St. Jacques 2007; Rubin 2021). The term ‘gist’ is used to refer to a representation of the thematic features of a *specific* episode, ‘schema’ to “adaptable associative networks of knowledge extracted over multiple similar experiences, capturing similarities across particular episodes” (Robin and Moscovitch 2017: 114). These ‘semantic(ized)’ representations frequently co-exist and interact with episodic memories.

A number of influential accounts posit a hierarchy of such representations, each level of which may contribute to recollective experience. According to the most comprehensive story, derived from Conway and Pleydell-Pearce (2000), recall involves the activation of an *autobiographical memory knowledge base*. This base comprises two types of representation: autobiographical knowledge—organized in a nested hierarchy ranging in abstraction from one’s ‘life story’ and ‘lifetime period’ knowledge, through to general, extended, and repeated event knowledge—and, second, episodic memories (Conway 2005: 608). Even on such a model, which takes there to be a clean distinction between episodic memories and memories for general events (such as of ‘taking first year laboratory classes’), retrieval of the latter is acknowledged to afford recollective experience. Indeed, within Conway’s ‘general event’ category, we find example entries for objects and persons such as ‘Prof. Smith’ (2005: 609). “General events”, we are told, “are more experience-near than lifetime periods and contain information about others, activities, locations” (Conway 2001: 1377). What this framework involves is the idea of a level of schematized representation retaining information for the general perceptible characteristics of event constituents, and it is by working *in tandem* with a general episodic construction system that recollective experiences are typically brought about (Conway 2005: 608). According to a more recent elaboration, semanticized representations facilitate experiential recall (or indeed ‘episodic future thinking’) by providing a ‘semantic scaffold’ (Greenberg and Verfaellie 2010; Irish and Piguet 2013).

From a philosophical perspective, the term ‘general event’ for the “heterogeneous” (Conway 2001: 1377) content of this level of representation is an arguably misleading catch-all term. It is not clear why everything at the intended level of abstraction should represent an event. Insofar as these curated elements are poised to be funnelled into a scene construction system, they should typically be representations of event *constituents*: “representations related to the recollected environment (e.g., people, friends, buildings, objects, [...] etc.),” which “allow the rememberer to form an episodic [memory]” (Svoboda et al. 2006: 2199).

Conway offers a useful characterisation of how ‘general event knowledge’ is employed during a typical instance of experiential recall. A cue, such as the phrase ‘seaside’ or ‘bicycle’, activates part of the autobiographical memory knowledge base. The cue is elaborated by means

of a search cycle for associated entries, followed by further search cycles as one continues to recall, typically terminating in recollection of an episode. But imagery is constructed throughout this process. Conway provides two schematized examples:

Cue word

Bicycle

'I can see my own bicycle at home in the garage'

'I rode it a lot when I was home last year in the summer [...]'

'There is a pub on the canal near us and 'X' and I cycled there and it was completely packed out with people sitting outside on the walls' [...]

Seaside

'When did I last go to the seaside?'

'I just had an image of a beach in Cornwall'

'I'm trying to remember going there on a holiday just after I left school, before college.

I remember we bought some nets, just like kids'

'And now I remember a rock pool and we had our nets in the water, and our trousers rolled up, and we had a bucket too' (Conway 2005: 617).

Consider the first line in 'Bicycle' and the second line in 'Seaside'. When all goes well, the imagery accompanying this stage of retrieval involves the activation of general event knowledge: the knowledge of what one's garage looks like as one opens the door, or what Gwithian Beach looks like in the summer. Sometimes one gets no further than this stage, and one is unable to retrieve memories of specific events. What is 'brought to mind' at this first stage of elaboration are the visualisable properties of so-called *general events* and their constituents (see also Vannucci et al. (2016)).¹⁴ Conway also notes that people can recall a

house they once lived in, people that they have briefly met, etc., without being able to recall any, or more than a few, specific memories. Retention of conceptual autobiographical knowledge that corresponds to experiences that actually

¹⁴ I do not mean to suggest that retrieval exclusively proceeds with increasing specificity from general events to episodes. It is surely possible for the recall of specific episodes to lead to salient general events, places, or objects. Still, it has been suggested that general events "are the preferred level of access" (Cabeza and St. Jaques 2007: 222) since, as Conway puts it: "[t]he level of general events [...] optimizes the amount of specific information available for least cognitive effort" (2001: 1377).

occurred without access to associated episodic memories may be one way the SMS [i.e., self-memory system] reduces the potential information overload (2005: 596).

This account fits the intuitive description I gave of Case W, and of the distinctive characteristics of objectual recall described in §2.1. What enables Case W is something at the ‘general event’ level of Conway’s hierarchy, beyond the level of event representations proper.

To summarise, there is a natural interpretation of the Nabokov case on which he enjoys a schematic experiential recollection with imagery constructed at the retrieval stage drawn from a range of episodic memories or ‘gists’. And there is also a natural interpretation of Case W on which I, the subject, might only *have* schema-like representations to go by due to the consolidation and semanticization of memory traces. So, despite its relative neglect of non-episodic forms of experiential recall, the empirical literature encourages the idea that there are recollective experiences not afforded by the retrieval of episodic memories. Consolidation processes, in particular, are understood as generalising or *semanticizing* content away from specific episodes and towards objects, places, and themes which extend across events in time.¹⁵

4 A simple positive account of objectual remembering

§§2–3 drew on considerations from introspection and from the empirical literature to build a case in favour of objectual recall and against EVENTISM. There are ways of experientially recalling ordinary material objects which do not involve experientially recalling events involving them. In this section, I sketch a positive account of what objectual remembering does involve. On the view proposed, to objectually recall *o* is to activate knowledge of *o*’s past perceptible qualities. This proposal ties a number of threads together. Objectual remembering is imagistically distinctive in lacking certain spatial-perspectival qualities which one’s experience must possess when one experientially recalls an event (§2.1). And, as §3 began to suggest, recollective experiences like Case W can be accommodated if we think of them as the manifestation of semantic(ized) representations of particular objects’ past perceptible qualities.¹⁶

So-conceptualized, objectual recall may more closely resemble semantic memory than episodic memory. But objectual recall involves activating a certain kind of (singular) knowledge

¹⁵ As Aronowitz (2019) argues, we should expect a system that cares about quickly retrieving relevant and accurate information to “alter stored representations to make them simpler, more cohesive and structured according to patterns and generalizations” (488) and to “generate new content via abstraction” (498).

¹⁶ One would not wish to simply say that, e.g., Nabokov knows Mademoiselle, and that it is this ‘objectual knowledge’ (see n. 4) that he is activating. For one thing, it is not clear there is any robust, context-invariant sense to be given to ‘knows x’ locutions (Farkas 2019).

in a distinctive way. It is constitutively bound up with the subject's retention of abilities to engage in conscious imagery which appropriately matches the object's past perceptible qualities, generalised from across the times at which the subject encountered the object. This is why objectual recall affords instances of *experiential* remembering.

Consider an analogy with discrimination. There is the *state* of being able to discriminate between tokens of ultramarine and azure, and there is the *process* of discriminating between them. Williamson (1990) recommends thinking of the former as knowledge and of the latter as its activation. One thing this does is explain the sense in which discriminating—like remembering—is a *success* notion: one cannot discriminate something in error, just as one cannot remember something that did not occur. In remembering, too, we have an occurrent, conscious episode (active recall) which is the product of a state. By a loose analogy with the claim that “[t]o discriminate between *a* and *b* is to activate the knowledge that *a* and *b* are distinct” (Williamson 1990: 7), the simplest story, I propose, is that to experientially recall *an object* is to activate knowledge of what it was in general like to perceptually encounter that object; e.g., of what it was like to see it.¹⁷ I say ‘knowledge of’ the qualities of an object simply to bring out the sense in which objectual recall is—like all experiential recall—bound up with a particular sort of mental imagery, something Don Locke expresses well:¹⁸

Someone who remembers that a certain shop was dark, dirty, and musty may be said to remember the shop, even to remember it well, but I do not think he can be said to recall it unless he remembers not just that it was dark, dirty, and musty, but remembers the dark, the dirt, the musty smell (1971: 80).

Now, one might be tempted to argue that, understood in this way, the phenomenon I have called objectual remembering must really collapse into either the experiential recall of a past event or mere sensory imagining. The line of thought would go as follows. *Remembering* as such involves temporally positioning that of which one is aware in one's personal past. But only *events* can be temporally positioned in the relevant sense (after all, a recalled object may still exist). Anything else must really be an act of *imagining*. Just as one can imagine future or counterfactual scenarios involving particular objects or people, one can imagine present and

¹⁷ There are some similarities here with Soteriou's (2013) proposal that “what is retained in the case of episodic memory is knowledge of [...] what it was like to apprehend the particular event now recalled” (173).

¹⁸ It might be objected that one could objectually recall something while remaining agnostic about whether one is remembering or instead confabulating. But, just as the observation that one can discriminate *a* from *b* without knowing one has done so does not undermine the claim that discrimination is knowledge activation, nor does it follow from the above that remembering, in such cases, is not a form of knowing.

actual events (Munro 2021). For instance, one might visually imagine the present interior of one's favourite café (assuming one isn't there at this moment). Although doing so of course involves drawing on memory in a broad sense, it doesn't involve remembering the occasions on which one acquired such information. Properly understood, then, the line of thought goes, 'objectual recall' is just imagining an object one has previously encountered. Something like this line of thought could perhaps be lifted from Hoerl (2014), who articulates a distinction between remembering seeing an object and merely remembering what it looks like. According to Hoerl, what distinguishes the former is that it involves appreciating that what one recalls is an *event* which is now completed and which lies in one's past:

Instances of remembering seeing *x* can be based on more than one perceptual encounter with *x*, without collapsing into a form of generic memory such as merely remembering what *x* looks like, because they involve an appreciation that what is being remembered can in some sense not be encountered again (2014: 369).

Extrapolating, one might think that this is what distinguishes acts of experiential recall *in general* from acts of sensory imagining. And, in that case, *remembering* an object, as opposed to merely imagining it, requires the mediation of an event after all.

However, the above line of thought rests on a crucial ambiguity in the notion of imagining. On one hand, there is harmless and obvious sense in which experiential remembering *in general* involves imagining, and so that objectual recall involves imagining in this sense is no objection. Langland-Hassan calls this *imagistic imagining*: a kind of state that seems, to its subject, to involve image-like or sensuous components but which is produced endogenously (2020: 54). In this sense, we might equally say that, properly understood, *episodic* recall involves imagining an event one has previously encountered but which has since passed. Nothing about the status of episodic rememberings as 'genuine' rememberings, versus 'mere imaginings', would follow from this alone. And so neither does it follow from the above line of thought, understood in this way, that objectual recall is not 'genuine' remembering.

On the other hand, 'imagining' in the above line of thought might be interpreted to mean what Langland-Hassan calls *attitude imagining*: roughly, "rich or elaborated thought about the possible, fictive, unreal, and so on, that is, in general, epistemically safe" (61). However, one can obviously misremember an object, just as one can misremember an event. If Nabokov misremembers Mademoiselle as wearing black-rimmed pince-nez when she in fact wore brown-rimmed pince-nez, he to that extent remembers her inaccurately. Instances of objectual recall have accuracy conditions which do not resemble attitude imagining any more

than instances of episodic recall.¹⁹ As Gaut (2003) puts it, “[a] memory image of the blue front door of my previous house involves a belief about that front door, not an imagining of it” (272).

But even if objectual recall cannot both usefully and critically be described as a form of imagining, it might yet be deemed a second-class or impure form of remembering. So, as I shall argue in the remainder of this section, the attitude and epistemic role of objectual recall is not only different from attitude imagining, it is also sufficiently *like* episodic recall that it clearly merits an equal status as a form of remembering *per se*.

The first consideration has to do with similar ‘top-down’ effects present across the experiential recall of events and of objects. As Hoerl (2014) went on to write,

what generates the element of ‘episodicity’ or ‘pastness’ in episodic memory, which makes remembering seeing *x* different from merely remembering what *x* looks like, is the way in which episodic memory recruits other knowledge and a particular kind of causal reasoning. When we remember episodically, we have an idea of some concrete way in which things have changed since the events [...] we remember, providing for a sense in which those [...] won’t occur again (2014: 370–1).

Hoerl suggests that insofar as memory mobilizes such knowledge and causal reasoning it is episodic (2014: 371). And there may indeed be a specific kind of knowledge and causal reasoning which is peculiar to the recollection of episodes. Yet, much like with recollection of a general *type* of event of which there may be tokens in one’s future, when we recall an object which persists across events in time and which one could perhaps re-encounter in the future, I want to suggest that it is still possible to ‘make concrete to oneself’ that what one has in mind is something which in some sense lies in one’s past.

In recalling Mademoiselle, Nabokov is not simply visualising a face which strikes him as familiar. He is carefully reconstructing the visual appearance of a person he knows he encountered throughout his early years. There is an awareness of pastness associated with this activity which derives not merely from some feeling of familiarity (Russell 1921: 161; Broad 1925: 266) but from poised knowledge concerning roughly where his encounters with Mademoiselle lie in his past. In the context of Conway’s (2005) Self-Memory System framework, the retrieval of memories about Mademoiselle’s appearance will be nested within lifetime period

¹⁹ I take no stance here on the so-called ‘authenticism–alethism’ debate (see n. 9), and so on whether successful objectual recall requires faithfulness to the general way(s) the object looked or sounded to the subject during encounters with it, or whether accuracy with respect to the object’s *de facto* properties is what matters. Independent of subjects’ goals and interests, there may be no strict, invariant answer.

knowledge. In objectual recall, one knows ('by description', we might say) *that* there are some experiences in one's past which had *this* approximate type of phenomenal character, so to speak. But it does not follow that such experiences are *what* one remembers.

There is a general consensus that experiential remembering is a complex cognitive activity requiring the exercise of various functionally and neurally dissociable but interacting processes, of which imagery represents just one important element (Vannucci et al. 2016: 456). Our appreciation of the pastness of what we recall when we experientially remember requires employing a rich and varied set of cognitive capacities. Insofar as experiential recall involves being in a position to know that what one remembers is located in the past, we need not think of this as enabled by the mere awareness of certain qualities of one's experience. It may involve phenomena discussed under the 'source monitoring' framework (Johnson et al. 1993), according to which subjects use content-based markers to determine whether they are remembering rather than, say, imagining. Perhaps objectual recall additionally involves appreciating that what is recalled is not confined to the boundaries of any particular encounter; that objects and persons have a life beyond our encounters with them.

As a result, even those who distinguish remembering proper in part by its role in a broader epistemic project of the subject (Hoerl 2001: 332–334) should be willing to embrace objectual recall as a form of remembering. The subject, activating knowledge of what it was (in general) like to perceptually encounter the object recalled, will similarly be in a position to know *that* the object was encountered in the past, and will be disposed to also form beliefs about *when* the recalled object had the perceptible qualities characterising one's recollective experience—even if it is no more specific than 'at some time in my past'. On this view, objectual recall might minimally involve the ability to appreciate that the object did possess the relevant perceptible qualities and that it may no longer do so. The knowledge one has concerns what it was like—that there are, at some point in one's past, encounters with the object in which it had *these* perceptible qualities—and in mobilizing this knowledge one will at some level be aware that the object may have since changed beyond one's capacity to recognise it.

To summarize this section's proposal, a simple story about objectual remembering can be told once we are no longer wedded to *EVENTISM*: to experientially recall an object is to activate knowledge of what it was in general like to perceptually encounter that object; knowledge that the object has on some occasion(s) in one's past exemplified *these* perceptible qualities. This knowledge involves a kind of direct reference to the object but is about the relevant series of encounters only 'by description', and this is reflected in the absence of certain spatial-perspectival imagery from one's recollective experience. Such knowledge will be embedded within a wider network of autobiographical knowledge concerning the object being something

one encountered at some earlier stage in one's life. And it will often also be associated with an array of event memories which one may, but need not, go on to experientially recall.

5 Experiential recall as recalled experience?

This section undercuts one of the most compelling sources of *prima facie* support for EVENTISM. An appealing idea is that experiential remembering is the recall of *experiences*. If there is an argument behind the appeal, it is presumably that the imagistic character of experiential recollection is best explained by supposing that *what* is recalled is an experience. In Martin's (2002) discussion of the following thesis,

DEPENDENCY: "to imagine sensorily a φ is to imagine experiencing a φ " (2002: 404)

according to which an act of sensorily imagining a red apple has a red apple *experience* as its object, Martin suggests that the thesis is supported by its capacity to explain the experiential character of sensory imagining: "sensory imagining is experiential or phenomenal precisely because *what* is imagined is experiential or phenomenal" (406; emphasis added).²⁰ Now there is a notorious Berkeleyan dispute concerning whether and in what sense imagining an object entails imagining *perceiving* it. And I do not wish to directly engage with that dispute here.²¹ Instead, I want to examine whether there is support for an analogous thesis in the case of remembering, in virtue of its capacity to explain the imagistic character of experiential recall, and, if there is, whether this offers support for EVENTISM (experiences being events).

In fact, we see something like this transposition in Martin (2001), where he argues that the imagistic character of episodic recall is owed to the fact that *what* is recalled is a past experience: "an episode of recall has as its object the initial experience which was the apprehending of the event" (2001: 278); "memory imagery [...] represents particular encounters in sensory experience from the past" (279). And this notion of "acquaintance with a past episode" is intended to be "explanatory of a sense of pastness" in episodic recall (269). More recently, too, Martin emphasises that since memory "provides us with a connection to the object of [...] awareness only through some prior connection" (2019: 117), "memorial experience is experience of one's past encounter with what one remembers" (120). What I want to suggest

²⁰ Martin does not argue for this thesis in its full generality. He regards it as plausible "at least for those cases where one imagines a situation 'from the inside'" (2002: 404).

²¹ See *inter alia* Peacocke (1985: 22ff) and Soteriou (2013: 159ff) versus Gregory (2013: 69) and Noordhof (2002).

is that, though the first of these two remarks is true, it does not follow that the object of recollective awareness is in general one's *past experience(s) of* what is remembered.

We can express the intended analogue of DEPENDENCY as follows:

EXPERIENTIALISM: To experientially recall x is to recall experiencing x.

To what extent is EXPERIENTIALISM supported by a capacity to explain the imagistic character of experiential remembering?

One blemish is that, like DEPENDENCY, EXPERIENTIALISM leads to unnatural consequences when we substitute in for *x* what is already an experience, e.g., an experience of a toothache. We would not wish to say that to experientially recall an experience of a toothache is to recall *experiencing an experience* of a toothache (Soteriou 2013: 162). Unless we are happy to say so, a restriction must be placed on the domain of EXPERIENTIALISM's substitutions, reducing its explanatory power. Secondly, just as Martin (2002: 404) is aware that applying DEPENDENCY to cases of imagining 'from the outside' may not be straightforward, nor is applying EXPERIENTIALISM to remembering from the outside. That is, it is not obvious that *what* one recalls when one experientially recalls an event from the outside is one's experience of the event.

However, the principal issue with EXPERIENTIALISM emerges when we try to substitute in *non-episodic* events. Suppose one experientially recalls a general event such as commuting to work in one's previous job. According to EXPERIENTIALISM, the character of one's recollective experience is determined by an experience one had in the past *of that general event*. But this is at best false, and verges on the incoherent. We do not experience general events. What we experience is, perhaps necessarily, particular (though of course particular events vary in duration). Even if EXPERIENTIALISM is adequate for paradigm cases of the episodic recall of events (from the inside), then, it does not seem generally applicable to non-episodic recall. And since experiential recollections of repeated or general events have too much in common with episodic cases to be considered fundamentally different in kind, EXPERIENTIALISM's inability to explain the experiential character of experiential remembering *in general* means that any truth it has is insufficient to support EVENTISM as a general claim about experiential remembering.²²

It is tempting to offer defenders of EXPERIENTIALISM the reply that sense can be made of remembering 'experiencing a general event'. After all, one will have experienced the many

²² Renoult et al. (2016: 243) cite a number of studies reporting substantial overlap in the neural correlates of episodic and repeated event memories, namely in the medial temporal lobe (including the hippocampus) and the anteromedial prefrontal cortex. And the recall of repeated events has also been found to engage regions involved in self-reference, spatiomotor imagery, and attentional control (Levine et al. 2004: 1641). Both episodic and non-episodic event recall are said to involve scene construction (Rubin and Umanath 2015).

specific events which it generalizes. And so one might interpret their commitment to remembering experiencing a general event as a commitment to subjects plurally remembering the many events which are the causal origin of the general event representation.

However, this picture of what suffices to experientially recall (a plurality of) specific events is not plausible. It could not generally suffice to experientially recall specific episodes in one's past that one retrieves a schematized representation abstracted from those past occasions. Take the example described by Conway (2005: 617), quoted in §3, in which a participant reports, 'I can see my own bicycle at home in the garage'. We would not wish to say that the subject is experientially remembering every past occasion on which they have looked at their bicycle in their garage. If such a loose causal aetiology were sufficient for the experiential recall of a past event, recollection of unique past events would be seldom achieved. Even as prosaic a case of episodic recall as remembering brushing one's teeth this morning would turn out to be a case of remembering many past events, for rich construction of that scene will draw on memories and schemas with many past events as their ultimate causal origins. Moreover, such a liberal picture of how these representations come to represent the things they do has costs elsewhere. If remembering specific past events were so effortless, it would be correspondingly *effortful* to prise the mind away from the past when constructively imagining particular events in one's personal future (Langland-Hassan 2020: 69).

6 Conclusion

Philosophers have often approached experiential remembering as though it were not merely the recall of things encountered in one's past in an experiential manner, but as involving a phenomenology of "reliving the circumstances" of one's encounter (Klein 2018: 121). This conception limits the scope of experiential recall to more or less specific episodes in one's past, a claim which would require substantial argumentation which has simply not been provided. I have argued, against this, that while paradigm *episodic* recollections have this character, and while this may be an instrumentally useful focus for some empirical investigation, experiential remembering more generally cannot be understood as being constrained in this way. If we are to understand what remembering is, how it differs from imagining, how and what kind of knowledge it affords, whether it is fundamentally representational or relational, *inter alia*, then we must pay more attention to experiential remembering in its full generality. It is with this in mind that the failure of *EVENTISM* should be instructive for future research.

In aiming to bring certain neglected cases of remembering to light, I have sought to be ecumenical in my positive remarks. But how is objectual remembering to be integrated within

the orthodox, binary taxonomy of declarative memory? It would be superficial to suggest that objectual remembering is a ‘third kind’ of memory, beyond the episodic and the semantic. We should not expect ontological distinctions at the level of content to be tracked by explanatorily significant cognitive kinds. What I have tried to suggest in places here is that we will likely find objectual remembering in the poorly mapped territories between the paradigmatically episodic and the paradigmatically semantic. The conception of that distinction as exclusive, exhaustive, and philosophically mature, invites one to overlook instances of remembering which require philosophical attention. We are told that “Episodic memories are for one-off experiences” (Robins 2017: 77), anchored to the contexts in which they were acquired, whereas semantic memory comprises “the retrieval of general conceptual knowledge divested of a specific spatiotemporal context” (Irish and Piguet 2013: 1). And this divorce in content is said to go along with a divorce in phenomenal character, so that items of semantic memory, including repeated events, are “not vividly recollected; they are rather ‘known’” (Levine et al. 2004: 1634).²³ Given what I have argued here, it is an oversimplification to suppose that only episodic recall has an experiential character of interest to the philosophy of mind. None of these remarks about the philosophical hygiene of a rigidly imposed episodic–semantic distinction need involve any tension with the understanding of that taxonomy as used in cognitive science, although it is equally worth highlighting that current classificatory models (e.g., Rubin (2021)) emphasise that episodic recall corresponds to one bundle of declarative memory phenomena among many, and that not all of other salient bundles can be meaningfully lumped together within a category of ‘semantic memory’ conceived of as lacking in imagery, self-reference, or a distinctive phenomenology. What I have argued here is that one of those bundles ought to be characterised, at least for philosophical purposes, as the experiential recall of *objects*.*

²³ Levine et al. (2004), in conceiving of repeated event recall as semantic memory (1641), suggest that repeated events are “not vividly recollected; they are rather ‘known’” (1634). Yet the mean subjective ratings of visual imagery vividness in their own study, while 82% for episodes, are still 57% for repeated events (e.g., one’s daily coffee brewing routine)—and only 22% for items of general knowledge (e.g., historical facts) (1635).

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