

## **PREFACE: REMEMBERING CONSCIOUSNESS**

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Research in ancient and mediaeval philosophy has made it increasingly clear that questions similar to modern concerns about consciousness were already considered before the early modern period, even if those debates took place in their particular contexts and in different conceptual frameworks. These philosophical and historical studies of pre-modern conceptions have, in turn, changed our perspective regarding the works of early modern philosophers. More and more, we come to see the historical-philosophical background of early modern thinkers and which aspects in their new philosophies built on, or responded to, traditional views. It seems to us that a better understanding of their (our) heritage furthers the understanding and appreciation of all the breaches and innovation they brought to European philosophy.

This issue, therefore, aims to contribute to research in the history of medieval and early modern philosophy of mind by shedding new light on the continuities and innovations during the transition from medieval to early modern philosophy of mind. The four papers focus on consciousness and, more specifically, on one of its less frequently considered aspects: memory. Memory gave rise to explanatory problems related to consciousness already in medieval philosophy, even if these issues were not necessarily formulated in terms of what modern philosophy came to regard as the problem of consciousness. Nevertheless, aspects of consciousness were clearly addressed when the schoolmen debated questions such as how it is possible to recall one's own past experiences; whether sensual memories are still in the mind when not entertained, and if so, how we can be unaware of them; how their non-physical counterparts, i.e. intellectual memories, are retained; and whether the objects of sensual and intellectual memory are experienced separately in the stream of consciousness or rather as one object.

In the early modern period, starting with Descartes, a new concept of mind emerged, which was inspired by and compatible with the advances of a new natural science based on mechanical principles. Nevertheless, the debates concerning specific

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questions in the philosophy of mind, including the problem of memory, retained a high degree of similarity to those of medieval philosophy, even in this new context.

The papers in this volume approach the connection between consciousness and memory from different angles. In her contribution, Sonja Schierbaum takes William of Ockham to be a proponent of a higher-order theory of self-awareness and replies to the objection that Ockham's theory cannot account for the asymmetry between the first-person and the third-person perspective in a non-circular way. Focusing on the special role of the will in the formation of the higher-order acts by means of which we become aware of our mental activity, Schierbaum can show how memory is related to consciousness in Ockham's approach: in order to be able to recollect some past event, we need to become aware also that we have once been in the situation of which we are supposed to have some memory. This, in turn, is only possible because we can voluntarily bring forth an act of cognition that is directed at one of our *own* mental acts.

Dániel Schmal shows in his paper that early modern authors are hard to make sense of without considering the background of medieval philosophy that shaped their thinking. Schmal discusses the problem of intellectual memory in Descartes and in particular the following questions: Are the objects of intellectual memory universals or particulars? Can ideas retained in the intellectual memory be recalled in a disembodied state of the soul? If so, why are they not conscious all the time? Schmal's central claim is that the role of intellectual memory in Descartes is interesting not because of the specific answers he gives to these questions – these hardly differ from those of medieval authors – but rather because of the systematic role intellectual memory plays for Descartes in the constitution of the conscious self.

The paper by Olivér István Tóth elaborates on this topic and explores the way in which the role of intellectual memory was discussed in the later Cartesian tradition by looking at the example of Spinoza. Spinoza famously rejected Cartesian dualism and embraced substance monism. Tóth argues that this raises a number of issues concerning the conscious status of memory. In particular, substance monism seems to rule out the retention of memories in the form of brain states but also intellectual memory understood as a form of memory independent of the body. His central claim is that even though Spinoza considerably modified Descartes' philosophy of mind, in responding to it, he nevertheless tried to account for the phenomenon labelled 'intellectual memory' by Descartes.

Philipp N. Müller discusses the Cartesian heritage in John Locke's conception of consciousness and memory. Müller argues that the two philosophers shared basic assumptions about the human mind. They both defended a same-order conception of consciousness and mental transparency, i.e. the thesis that every mental state is necessarily conscious, an idea which seems highly counterintuitive at first sight. But as Müller shows, Locke in some ways applied Descartes's signature doctrine of the transparency of the mind more consistently than Descartes himself and used it to counter some of Descartes's own doctrines. Thus, Locke argued against innate ideas, for instance, by pointing to memory, which he can, in turn, accommodate with the help of transparency.

This special issue had its origin in the 2017 CENTRAL Kolleg “Consciousness in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy of Mind”– a collaborative research and teaching project of junior researchers and graduate students from Humboldt University of Berlin, ELTE Budapest and the University of Vienna. We would like to thank the *Central European Network for Teaching and Research in Academic Liaison* for generous funding and in particular the project coordinator, Aleksandra Laski (HU Berlin), for the kindness and immense flexibility with which she supported the project. We would also like to thank the Berlin Excellence Cluster *TOPOI. The Formation and Transformation of Space and Knowledge in Ancient Civilizations* for providing space and support for two workshops at HU Berlin, in which most of the authors of this issue participated. Both CENTRAL and TOPOI provided generous funding for the publication of this issue, enabling it to benefit from the expert work of two language editors, Isabel Adey and Ian Drummond. Special thanks are due to all the referees for their comments on the submitted papers, and last but not least, to all contributors for their inspiring work.