



17 On Seeming to Remember*

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Philosophers and psychologists often distinguish episodic or personal memory from propositional or semantic memory. A vexed issue concerns the role, if any, of memory “impressions” or “seemings” within the latter. According to an important family of approaches, seemings play a fundamental epistemological role vis-à-vis propositional memory judgments: it is one’s memory seeming that Caesar was murdered, say, that justifies one’s judgment that he was murdered.¹ Yet, it has been convincingly argued that these approaches lead to insurmountable problems and that memory seemings are not well-suited to play this justifying role. As a result, many contemporary accounts of propositional memory dispense with these seemings altogether. Is the idea that memory seemings play a key role in propositional memory really the result of bad theorizing? My aim is to shed light on this issue, which I will approach as follows.

In Section 1, I contrast episodic memory with propositional memory so as to clarify the nature of the latter. According to the account I put forward, episodic memory consists in the preservation of acquaintance with objects and events, whereas propositional memory consists in the preservation of thought contents. In Section 2, I turn my attention to the contrast between propositional memory contents and propositional memory as an attitude. I argue that they play different roles. Memory contents satisfy a past awareness constraint and a causal constraint; the attitude of remembering explains why we are inclined to endorse these contents. This distinction leads me to explore the attitude of remembering, and I argue, in Section 3, that the most appealing account of this attitude is in terms of feelings of familiarity. In Section 4, I turn my attention to the epistemology of propositional memory and revisit the claim that propositional memory judgments are justified by memory seemings. In so doing, I contend that the attitude of remembering plays an exclusively explanatory role and does not contribute to the epistemology of propositional memory judgments. I conclude by drawing a more general lesson regarding the respective roles of attitudes and contents.



1 Memory: Propositional vs. Episodic

Let me start by introducing the sort of phenomena that fall under the label of “propositional memory.” I shall do so by contrasting these phenomena with what happens when we remember episodically.

We often attribute memories to people with the help of the verb “to remember” followed by nominal constructions, as when we say, “Mary remembers her first encounter with her mother-in-law,” or “John remembers the first movements of the symphony.” We thereby imply (among other things) that Mary and John have been acquainted with the events and objects they remember. This is sometimes called “personal” and sometimes “episodic” memory.²

What happens when we remember episodically? First, we must have been acquainted with the objects or events that are remembered, where the past acquaintance is typically perceptual—for instance, Mary saw her mother-in-law. Second, this past acquaintance informs our memory of these objects or events. Episodic memory is phenomenologically rich: it is, for Mary, “as if” she was seeing her mother-in-law and, for John, “as if” he was hearing the overture of the symphony. That is to say, memory here consists in a preserved acquaintance or cognitive contact (Byrne, 2010; Martin, 2001). What I shall call *memory images* make one aware of the relevant events or objects.³

By contrast, propositional memory is typically (but, of course, not only) manifested in one’s knowledge of historical and mathematical facts.⁴ When Sam remembers that Caesar was murdered, or Mary remembers that the square root of 625 is 25, we face cases of propositional memory. In a nutshell, propositional memory consists in the preservation of propositional contents. Thanks to this kind of memory, propositional contents that we have judged or merely entertained remain available for thought and are typically accepted or endorsed at later times.⁵ If this is what propositional memory amounts to, then it no doubt differs from episodic memory. In particular, propositional memory does not involve memory images. Consider Sam, who has preserved the content that Caesar was murdered and is disposed to endorse it. First, Sam is plainly not in a position to enjoy a memory image that would make him aware of Caesar’s murder. After all, he has not been acquainted with this event—perceptually or otherwise—and so cannot have a preserved acquaintance with it in the form of a memory image (McGrath, 2007; Teroni, 2017).⁶ Second, while propositional memory arguably always traces back to a past learning event, it does not presuppose episodic memory of this event. Actually, it does not even presuppose that one has preserved any information about it. For instance, Sam may remember that Caesar was murdered while having no inkling as to how he acquired this information, let alone be in a position to re-live, say, the relevant classroom experience. Third, the idea that propositional memory involves memory images would be hard to make sense of in many cases, as in the case of Mary who remembers that the square root of 625 is 25.

I hope the foregoing is enough to capture the very familiar phenomena that I describe as propositional memory. In what follows, I shall be exclusively concerned with this kind of memory.

2 Propositional Memory: Content vs. Attitude

I will start exploring propositional memory with the help of the important, yet surprisingly often overlooked, distinction between *memory contents* and *memory as a mode or an attitude* (Locke, 1971, chap. 1; Matthen, 2010).⁷

To explain what is at stake, let me start by noting that two distinct features of a psychological state may lead one to describe it as a memory. One may describe a psychological state as a memory first because its *content* satisfies some constraints. Recent discussions of propositional memory have almost exclusively focused on the specification of these constraints. Given my aim here, I suggest that we adopt the following rough characterization of propositional memory contents: a propositional content p is a memory content for S if and only if (i) it was the content of a past representation of S that p , and (ii) its occurrence in S is caused by this past representation.⁸ The content that Caesar was murdered is a memory content for Sam in virtue of (i) Sam having previously judged that Caesar was murdered, and (ii) this content being actually available to Sam because he judged so.⁹ A content may thus fail to qualify as a memory content because the subject was not previously aware of it, or because, despite having been aware of it, his past awareness does not explain the actual availability of that content.¹⁰

Observe now that the contrast between memory contents and other sorts of contents holds independently of the subject's inclination to judge memory contents to be true. On the one hand, someone may entertain a memory content without being inclined to endorse it—the fact that a content satisfies the previous constraints does not imply that there is an inclination to judge it true. In retrospect, we typically characterize the situation in which a memory content does not go together with such an inclination by saying that we did not realize, at the time, that we were remembering. On the other hand, we may also be inclined to endorse a content that fails to qualify as a memory content, either because we erroneously believe that it does so qualify, or because we have other reasons for endorsing it.

Let me now turn to the second feature of a psychological state that may lead one to describe it as a memory. This second feature is the specific *attitude* that the subject has toward a content. The fact that there is such a distinction between memory contents and the attitude of remembering is plain given that they can independently vary. The attitude of remembering sometimes targets contents that are not memory contents—in such cases, we often say that what we seem to remember is a figment of our imagination. Moreover, we have already acknowledged that this attitude may be absent when we entertain memory contents. Memory content is one thing, the attitude of remembering another.

How should we go about characterizing the attitude of remembering? Contrary to what I have just said regarding memory contents, we cannot dissociate the attitude of remembering from the subject's inclination to endorse the content that it targets. As opposed to someone who *entertains* a content or *supposes* that it is true, someone who *remembers* the content is inclined to endorse it, and he will endorse it if he has no reason to doubt that it is true or that he has preserved it. As Burge (1993: 465) rightly observes, propositional memory ("purely preservative memory" in his terminology) preserves contents with judgmental force, i.e., we are inclined to endorse these contents when we remember. For that reason, an account of the attitude of remembering is an account of a tendency to endorse some contents, a tendency that explains the crucial role propositional memory plays in our cognition. Now, as this tendency is obviously not exclusive to the attitude of remembering, is it possible to say a bit more in order to clarify what we are after?

I shall attempt to do so by focusing first on the correctness conditions of mental states in general and then by applying this idea to propositional memory. Consider the following psychological states: judging that p , conjecturing that p , and remembering that p . These attitudes take the same content, which is why they share an important part of their correctness conditions. Yet, the fact that these are different attitudes has itself a distinct impact on their respective correctness conditions.¹¹ Roughly, it is because one *judges* that the psychological state of judging that p is correct if and only if the content is true; it is because one *conjectures* that the state of conjecturing that p is correct if and only if the content is probable; and it is because one *remembers* that the state of remembering that p is correct if and only if that content was the content of a past representation that is causally responsible for its being now available. These differences in the correctness conditions trace back to the contribution of the different attitudes.

In light of these observations, we can conclude that the attitude of remembering plays an important explanatory role: it explains why we are inclined to endorse some contents out of a sensitivity to the fact that these contents are available to us because they have been previously represented. Our task in Section 3 is to examine what this attitude and sensitivity amount to. But let me first wrap up this discussion of the contrast between memory contents and memory as an attitude. An account of memory contents should proceed in terms of a previous awareness constraint and a causal constraint. As opposed to this, an account of the attitude of remembering is an account of a distinctive tendency to endorse some contents.

3 Explanation: The Nature of the Attitude

This section revolves around the following issue. In propositional memory, we typically endorse whatever we remember. If Sam remembers that Caesar was murdered, then in all likelihood (and if he has no conflicting evidence),

he will endorse this as a fact. We have just concluded that this is a characteristic of the attitude of remembering. Given that a central aspect of this attitude is a tendency to endorse the content it targets, how should we understand it? In what follows, I do not explore all the available options—I rather focus on two unpersuasive accounts before introducing my favorite one.¹²

The first account consists in regarding our inclination to endorse memory contents as a primitive and not further explainable trait of propositional memory, at least insofar as the first-person level is concerned (Goldman, 1993a).¹³ This amounts to saying that, from the subject's perspective, it is simply that she finds herself so inclined. No memory attitude that would help her to make sense of this inclination is available to her. Sensitivity to the fact that contents are available because they have been previously represented is a characteristic of subpersonal processes and is not made manifest at the first-person level.

Now, this flat denial of a first-person level explanation as to why we are typically inclined to endorse memory contents should come as a surprise. This is because there appears to be a clear difference between two distinct cases. You can be aware that you are simply inclined to endorse a content. Alternatively, you can be aware that you are so inclined because, as we often say, you *seem to remember* (e.g., Cullison, 2010). In the latter case, reference to remembering appears to be explanatory of the inclination to endorse the content, but the first account fails to acknowledge this.¹⁴ I do not mean to suggest that we should always look for a first-person level explanation of the inclination to endorse memory contents. The suggestion is more modest: typically, memory makes itself manifest at the first-person level as the source of the inclination to endorse a content.¹⁵ This is why the first account is not persuasive.

We often explain why we are inclined to endorse memory contents by saying that we seem to remember. Which explanation do we offer when we do so? To answer this question, let me say a few words about “look” constructions, which function in very similar ways as “seem to remember.” Look constructions, it is frequently observed, lend themselves to different readings (Chisholm, 1957, chap. 4; Maund, 2003, chap. 7). We can read “It looks as if it will rain” as expressing the belief that one has good reasons to think it will rain. This is the *epistemological* reading. “I seem to remember that *p*” is read epistemologically when it is read as expressing my belief that I have good reasons to think that a content is a memory content. In light of the rough characterization we use here, this is the belief that I did previously represent a content and that this past event explains why the content is now available to me.¹⁶

The second account of the attitude of remembering recruits the epistemological reading of “seem to remember.” It claims that beliefs about contents explain our inclination to endorse memory contents. More precisely, the attitude of remembering is understood in terms of the

functional role that individuates memory contents: this attitude consists in the subject's belief that a content he has in mind actually plays this role.¹⁷ Sensitivity to the fact that contents have been previously represented is now a characteristic of the first-person level, since it takes the shape of this belief. That being said, this account of the inclination to endorse memory contents is not very appealing for at least three reasons.

First, it rests on unconvincing psychological assumptions. We are surely prone to surmise that contents play a functional role when there is room for doubt and when alternative explanations for their availability are salient to us. To illustrate, suppose that Michelle tells her friend Sam that he sometimes makes up historical facts. He may then think about it, conclude that the content that Caesar was murdered is available to him because he learned it somewhere, and as a result endorse it. However, the claim that we should explain all memory judgments in this way is difficult to reconcile with their typical immediacy. Second, and in direct connection, the explanation is far too intellectualistic (Goldman, 1993a, 1993b). Children make memory judgments well before they understand the nature of memory contents—grasping relations between thought contents across time is, after all, a substantial cognitive achievement. This provides the opportunity to come back to the claim put forward in Section 2, according to which past-related correctness conditions in memory are the result of the attitude of remembering. One reason for this claim is that attitudes are at play well before subjects have the capacity to understand what they are. The account under discussion raises a worry precisely because it rejects this claim in identifying the attitude of remembering with complex beliefs. Third and finally, the explanation is circular. How can Sam believe that he previously judged that p , if not by endorsing other propositional memory contents? For these reasons, beliefs about the functional role played by memory contents cannot explain the inclination to endorse them that is characteristic of remembering. To understand this attitude, we should look elsewhere.

To home in on the attitude of remembering, we have to come back to the “seem to remember” locution. Similar to “this looks red to me,” “I seem to remember” lends itself to a *phenomenological* reading, as opposed to an epistemological one. Read this way, these expressions refer to specific experiences. “Looking red” refers to the distinctive visual experience that red surfaces elicit, and “seeming to remember” refers to an experience that is characteristic of propositional memory. Now, it is hardly deniable that experiences often accompany memory judgments—this is why so many philosophers have referred to impressions of remembering, memory impressions, or seemings (e.g., Audi, 1995; Pollock, 1974; Pollock & Cruz, 1999; Russell, 1921). The real issue is not the existence of these seemings, but their nature and their role(s) within propositional memory.

As regards their nature, I shall rest content with a few observations (see Teroni, 2017). First, it is important to emphasize that *memory seemings* differ from the *memory images* distinctive of episodic memory. Memory

seemings do not constitute a retained acquaintance with the relevant objects or events, and they are phenomenologically much poorer than memory images. Seeming to remember that Caesar was murdered is not being in a state akin to seeing his murder. More specifically, these seemings do not vary as a function of what is retrieved. They do no more than tag the content as being a memory, and they differ from one another only insofar as they are more or less intense.¹⁸ Second, among the many approaches to these seemings, a quite appealing one claims that they consist in feelings of familiarity. In the phenomenological sense, to “seem to remember” a content is for it to feel familiar.¹⁹ In the present context, this means that propositional memory contents typically feel familiar, which is why we are inclined to endorse them. This is what the subject’s sensitivity to the fact that contents have been previously represented amounts to, and it is squarely located at the first-person level. But we now explain the inclination to accept memory contents in a way that is not too intellectualistic and is faithful to the fact that we typically endorse memory contents immediately, not as a result of reasoning. An additional virtue of an account in terms of feelings of familiarity is that it explains typical mistakes of self-attribution, which are due to illusions of familiarity. This makes for an attractive account of the attitude of remembering.²⁰

Now that we have a clearer picture of the attitude of remembering, let me emphasize an important consequence of our having carefully kept content and attitude apart. The attitude of remembering need not accompany memory contents, which may in addition be endorsed for a variety of reasons. But observe that we are in a position to say that, when the inclination to endorse these contents is explained by a feeling of familiarity, the attitude of remembering plays a distinctive first-person level explanatory role. It is only when feelings of familiarity come about that we endorse these contents because we (seem to) remember.²¹

Let me conclude this section. The best explanation of why we are typically inclined to endorse memory contents proceeds in terms of feelings of familiarity that characterize the attitude of remembering. The next issue regards the epistemological consequences of the explanatory role characteristic of this attitude.

4 Justification: Content vs. Attitude

In the previous section, we recruited memory seemings to explain why we are typically inclined to endorse memory contents. I now turn my attention to a key epistemological issue regarding propositional memory. Do memory seemings justify the judgments we make when we remember? I will explore this issue by examining a widespread approach about propositional memory that gives a positive answer to this question.

According to this approach, there is a distinctive justification in propositional memory: the memory seemings that typically explain why

we judge also justify our endorsing the contents we happen to retrieve.²² If you seem to remember that Caesar was murdered, i.e., if that content feels familiar, then you are justified in judging that he was murdered (e.g., Audi, 1995; Pollock, 1974; Pollock & Cruz, 1999). At least, you are justified if you are aware of no defeaters, which may have to do with information suggesting that the judgment is false or that you could not have learned the relevant fact. In this sense, the justification provided by feelings of familiarity is defeasible or *prima facie*.

Why is this approach popular? The following line of thought constitutes an important source of motivation. In many, if not most, cases of propositional memory, we have lost track of our reason(s) for having judged that *p* in the first place. Sam is likely to have forgotten why he came to judge that Caesar was murdered, for instance. Claiming that these memory judgments are unjustified would therefore generate a substantial form of skepticism. Now, according to a widespread approach, whatever contributes to the justification of a judgment must be accessible by the subject who makes that judgment—this is internalism about justification (Pappas, 2014). To the extent that one sides with internalism, a sensible move in the epistemology of propositional memory consists in avoiding skepticism by claiming that memory seemings—experiential states to which we have access when we retrieve contents—justify our endorsing these contents.²³

Accounting for the justification of propositional memory judgments in terms of memory seemings should look quite convincing—indeed, it has convinced many philosophers. Yet, this account faces a serious worry insofar as memory seemings turn out to be insufficient for the justification of propositional memory judgments (Annis, 1980; Naylor, 1982). Suppose that Michael came to judge that Caesar died in his bed on the basis of fanciful reasons. Years later, he entertains the thought that Caesar died in his bed, and it so happens that he seems to remember that this was the case and is aware of no defeater for that judgment. The account under discussion would assess Michael's memory judgment that Caesar died in his bed as justified. This is a claim we have every reason to avoid: memory cannot function as a generative epistemological source in this way.²⁴ After all, it is because Michael judged on the basis of fanciful reasons that his judgment was unjustified when he made it for the first time. The fact that the content now feels familiar surely cannot turn this unjustified judgment into a justified one. Yet, the account as it stands is committed to saying that the justification of propositional memory judgments is completely divorced from past reasons to judge. This is unacceptable. In a slogan, “garbage in, garbage out” (Jackson, 2011).

This parallels the more general conclusion reached by some philosophers regarding the justificatory role of seemings: it is not seemings in general, but only some of them that justify.²⁵ In particular, if a seeming has a problematic aetiology, then it cannot justify a subject to endorse the content that seems true to him (Bergman, 2013; Jackson, 2011; Markie, 2013). In propositional

memory, aetiology of course takes center stage, since the feeling of familiarity originates in a situation in which the subject has already judged for good or bad reasons.²⁶ This dependence of the seeming on a past situation in which the belief was acquired is what makes it unappealing to claim that endorsing a content because it feels familiar is sufficient for justification. Memory is not an independent source of justification; it can only transmit it (McGrath, 2007; Naylor, 1982; Teroni, 2014).²⁷ Memory seemings do not generate a new type of justification, an observation that chimes well with the fact that retaining and manifesting a belief is not a matter of basing it on new evidence. This conclusion can be strengthened if we remind ourselves of the nature of these seemings. Feelings of familiarity toward contents are reliably caused by the fact that these contents have been entertained. So, they may justify the judgment that they have been entertained. But they cannot justify our endorsing these contents: the fact that a content has already been entertained is hardly a reason to think it true.

Let me highlight three aspects of the conclusion we have reached so far, namely the conclusion that feelings of familiarity cannot justify our endorsing of the contents they target. First, this conclusion goes against something we may call “present-tense internalism,” i.e., the claim that all the factors relevant to the justification of a judgment are accessible to the subject *at the time he makes that judgment* (Teroni, 2014). The conclusion is nevertheless compatible with more relaxed forms of internalism, for instance those according to which these factors must have been accessible at some point in the past (at the time the belief is acquired, for instance).²⁸

Second, the claim is limited to feelings of familiarity and is not meant to carry over to other experiences we may have when we remember. In Section 1, we distinguished episodic from propositional memory by saying that memory images are characteristic of the former but not of the latter. When we episodically remember, it is as if we were perceiving the relevant events or objects again. Nothing I have said here militates against the idea that memory images constitute an original form of justification—we may have to adopt distinct accounts of propositional and episodic memory justification (Teroni, 2014). More specifically, there is an important difference between propositional and episodic memory. When, and only when, we remember episodically, the truth-maker of the judgments we make is manifest to us. For instance, we judge that a friend wore a yellow dress at a party because we remember her wearing the dress. This may well have epistemological consequences (Conee, 2013; Hoerl, 2001; Teroni, 2014).

Third, and most importantly, the conclusion that feelings of familiarity are not sufficient for justification leaves their exact epistemological role underspecified. Here is how I think we should go about specifying that role. If we insist on aetiological issues in the epistemology of propositional memory, then the net result is that we are justified in endorsing a memory content because it feels familiar only if we had good reasons to make the judgment in the first place.²⁹ This is the extent of memory’s epistemological

dependence. Now, there are two options at this stage. One option is to say that the judgment we make when we remember is justified *by the feeling of familiarity provided it has the right aetiology*. This is tantamount to saying that the reasons we had to pass the judgment in the first place—our past reasons, we may say—play no epistemological role when we remember. Alternatively, we may say that the judgment is justified *by these past reasons*. I think we should favor the second option. Here is why.

According to the first option, feelings of familiarity play an epistemological role only when they are filtered by considerations that are typically outside of the subject's ken when he remembers. If we concede this much, however, it is difficult to see why we should deny that past reasons play an epistemological role at the time of memory. Once we accept that endorsing a content is justified (or not) as a function of the subject's past reasons, why not wholeheartedly embrace the idea that preserving a justified belief is not a matter of basing it on new evidence? Let me emphasize that the option under discussion should receive no support from the fact that feelings of familiarity play an explanatory role. In Section 3, we granted that these feelings explain our inclination to endorse the relevant contents. Memory seemings do make a psychological difference; they contribute to making the judgment intelligible from the subject's perspective. This is why I insisted that we should distinguish a simple inclination to endorse a content from the inclination to endorse it because we seem to remember. The present issue is whether memory seemings additionally play an epistemological role.³⁰

Once explanatory and epistemological issues are distinguished, the claim that feelings of familiarity justify endorsing the contents they target is difficult to support. Suppose that Sam acquired the belief that Caesar was murdered because he attended a lecture on the Roman Empire with you ten years ago. Suppose, moreover, that he now makes this judgment because he did attend this lecture. I submit that, intuitively, his judgment is justified—provided, of course, there are no defeaters. However, the absence of a feeling of familiarity is not one of these defeaters. If you come to learn that no feeling of familiarity accompanies Sam's retrieving this content, you will not revise your assessment of his judgment.³¹ So, judgments based on past reasons—judgments made because one had these reasons—are justified in the absence of feelings of familiarity.³² This suggests that ascribing a justificatory role to these feelings betrays a confusion between an explanation as to why we sometimes judge out of a sensitivity to what we have previously represented (which consists in a content's feeling familiar) and what justifies this judgment (the past reasons). In other words, to advocate the option under discussion is to confuse the *attitude of remembering*—which only explains why we make memory judgments—and *constraints on contents* that make them (justified) memory contents—constraints that specify what happened at the time the belief was acquired, as well as the relation between what happened then and what is happening at the time of memory.

These considerations motivate the second option distinguished previously, which is often described as the *past reasons theory* (Annis, 1980; Bernecker, 2010; Naylor, 1982). According to this theory, insofar as past reasons have not been defeated in the meantime, they justify endorsing the same content at the time of memory. If Sam's reason for judging that Caesar was murdered is that he hears a teacher say so, this reason—provided that, for example, Sam did not come across information suggesting that the teacher is a fraud—justifies Sam's memory judgment that Caesar was murdered.³³ The past reasons theory avoids the worries attached to the claim that seeming to remember a content justifies endorsing that content. Of course, many refinements would be required in order to develop a complete account of propositional memory justification along the lines recommended by the past reasons theory.³⁴ These refinements shall not concern me here.

What I want to emphasize is that the past reasons theory does not, in itself, explain why we make memory judgments. Past reasons for judging that *p* may justify us in making the same judgment at a later time, but they do not explain why we are inclined to make that judgment when we remember. In light of the distinction between explanatory and justificatory issues related to propositional memory, we can conclude that the past reasons theory should remain open to a variety of explanations as to why we make propositional memory judgments, and in particular to first-person level explanations in terms of feelings of familiarity.

We have reached the following conclusion: given that feelings of familiarity do not justify, the most appealing approach to the justification of propositional memory judgments is a version of the past reasons theory. With the help of this theory, we have dissociated the first-person level explanation of why we make memory judgments (viz., because of a phenomenologically manifest attitude of remembering) from what justifies these judgments (which relates to the aetiology of memory contents).

5 Conclusion: Generalizing the Lesson

I shall now bring together and generalize the conclusions of Section 4 (feelings of familiarity explain why we endorse memory contents) and Section 5 (these feelings do not justify). These conclusions contain a more general lesson: having an attitude toward a given content is seldom a reason to endorse it. It is, I suggest, because feelings of familiarity characterize memory as an attitude that they are unfit to justify the contents they target. Why is that so?

In general, the occurrence of an attitude does not carry any implication regarding whether we are justified in endorsing the content of this attitude. Consider these cases. "Why do you think that *p* is true?—Because I believe that *p*." "Why do you think that *o* is dangerous?—Because I am afraid of it." "Why do you think that *p* is true?—Because I seem to remember that *p*."

It is fair to say that reference to any of these attitudes is not a good answer to these epistemological questions.

I have illustrated the fact that attitudes need not justify the judgments to which they incline us with belief, fear, and remembering. These attitudes cannot justify the relevant judgments for the same reason. The reason is that believing, having an emotion and remembering are all based, albeit in different ways, on other psychological states. Believing may be based on other beliefs, on perception, or on introspection. To be afraid of a dog, one must be aware of it independently of one's emotion, for instance by perceiving it (Deonna & Teroni, 2012). Fear would in that case be based on a perceptual experience. Similarly, someone who remembers a content must have previously thought it. Remembering is in this (different) sense based on past mental states.

This basing relation has the following consequence. In order to assess whether the judgments we make because we have these attitudes are justified, we should turn our attention to the states on which they are based. Believing is obviously an inclination to endorse a content. But to assess whether endorsing that content is justified, we should turn our attention to whatever the belief is based on. The judgment that the dog is dangerous, which one is inclined to make because one is afraid of it, is justified only if the perceptual experience on which fear is based meets some constraints—for instance, if it represents the approach of a growling dog. Drawing attention to the fact that one's fear is based on a perceptual experience with this content explains why one is justified in judging that the dog is dangerous. In a parallel fashion, we should assess the justification of the judgment we are inclined to make when we seem to remember as a function of the past mental state on which the memory is based. As this is typically a past judgment, the justification of the memory judgment depends on the justification of a past judgment, and so on one's reasons to make it.

The attitudes of believing, fearing, and remembering do not justify the relevant judgments. Yet, if my argument has been successful, attitudes are still needed to explain our inclination to endorse the relevant contents. In the same way as one might not have been inclined to judge that the dog is dangerous if one had not been afraid of it, one might not have been inclined to judge that Caesar was murdered if one did not seem to remember that so was the case. These explanations can take many different shapes. In the case of the emotions, it seems safe to say that these explanations are located at the first-person level. Emotions are phenomenologically salient, and we usually are in a position to know that we are inclined to make judgments because we emote. I have argued that the explanation of our tendency to endorse the contents that the attitude of remembering targets is of the same nature. Both of these explanations contrast with the explanation as to why we endorse the contents we believe, because believing is not a phenomenologically salient attitude.

Notes

- * I am grateful to Sven Bernecker for his helpful comments on a previous version of this paper.
- 1 Here and in what follows, I use the term “judgment” where others prefer to talk of occurrent (as opposed to dispositional) belief. Let me emphasize that I do not think of a judgment as a mental activity that critically assesses the evidence for and against a given proposition. In the intended sense, judgments take place whenever we accept or endorse propositions and can be quite passive, as is the case for many perceptual and memory judgments, for instance.
 - 2 The characterization of episodic memory I am about to offer will inevitably be controversial, given the various debates as to what it amounts to. I shall leave this mainly terminological issue aside in what follows. The only point I wish to emphasize is that there is a fundamental difference between the phenomena I describe as episodic memory and those I describe as propositional memory. Naylor (2011) discusses the intricacies facing the definition of episodic memory and defends a position that differs from the one sketched here.
 - 3 Images have a bad press. Here and in what follows, I use the term “image” only to emphasize that remembering something resembles perceiving it. For discussion, see Teroni (2017).
 - 4 Given the way I have characterized episodic memory, one may remember that so-and-so happened in one’s own past without this qualifying as an instance of remembering episodically. In the following, I use examples of propositional remembering of historical facts, but my conclusions should hold for any case of propositional memory as I characterize it here.
 - 5 These contents are only typically endorsed, since one can remember that p without judging that p (e.g., when one has conflicting evidence). For a careful consideration of these cases, see Bernecker (2010, chap. 3).
 - 6 This does not mean that sensory imagery never accompanies propositional memory: it obviously sometimes does. This imagery is inessential, however, since it does not constitute one’s memory of the relevant events or objects. See e.g., Martin, 2015.
 - 7 The pervasive use of the expression “propositional attitude” explains why I favor the latter term in the context of a discussion of propositional memory.
 - 8 Three observations are in order. First, we should leave room for some variation between the content of the past representation and that of memory (e.g., Matthen, 2010) and relax the identity constraint I use here (see Bernecker, 2010, pp. 217–229 for a convincing account in terms of content entailment). Second, the causal requirement should avoid deviant causal chains. Third, there is the additional issue, which I leave aside here, of whether only true contents can qualify as memory contents. Acknowledging these issues entails that the characterization I put forward should be significantly refined, but I believe that this does not affect my **current** argument.
 - 9 When I say that a content is a memory content “for the subject,” I do not mean that it is so “from his perspective.” I only mean that this content plays the relevant role in his psychology. The satisfaction of the relevant constraints need not be transparent to the subject. Let me observe in addition that the past awareness constraint simply acknowledges what Campbell (1994) describes as the “stepwise character” of memory. To say that memory presupposes past awareness does not imply that the subject paid attention to this past awareness at the time it occurred.
 - 10 Here and in what follows, I shall call the contents that satisfy these constraints “memory contents.” This should not be read as implying that these contents are exclusive to memory.

- 11 In favoring this approach to the contrast between content and attitude, I follow suggestions made, among others, by Crane (2003) and Recanati (2007). See also Matthen (2010) and Deonna and Teroni (2012, chap. 7).
- 12 I criticize some of these options from a slightly different perspective in Teroni (2014).
- 13 Goldman thinks, and I agree, that this is a consequence of classical variants of functionalism. Many advocates of the past reason theory, which we shall have the opportunity to discuss in Section 4, favor this explanation of our inclination to endorse propositional memory contents.
- 14 Confronted with the same dialectical situation with respect to perception, Campbell (1984) explains why understanding perception purely in terms of the making of non-inferential judgments is unpersuasive. He does so by drawing attention to the difference between a standard perceiver who judges as she does because of what she sees and a blind yet reliable seer who finds himself with exactly the same judgments popping in his mind. I wish to insist on the existence of a similar difference with respect to memory.
- 15 I agree here with Werner (2013) that only some dispositions to judge are explained by a specific phenomenology.
- 16 Incidentally, observe that the contrast between episodic and propositional memory is sometimes drawn by saying that this sort of belief is distinctive of episodic memory (Owens, 1996).
- 17 Such a view may be inspired by some remarks made by Bernecker (2010, pp. 235–239), who does not explicitly endorse it.
- 18 For that reason, as Audi (1995) observes, insisting on the idea that propositional memory judgments always trace back to memory images is to pursue an inappropriate analogy with perception.
- 19 I favor an approach in terms of feelings of familiarity rather than in terms of feelings of pastness for two reasons that I can only sketch here. First, appealing to feelings of pastness may be plausible in relation to episodic memory. But it is much less so in relation to propositional memory. One's seeming to remember that Caesar was murdered is not a situation in which one feels the pastness of this content. Second, and as Byrne observes, "while the 'feeling of familiarity' is, well, familiar, surely the 'feeling of pastness' is not." (Byrne, 2010)
- 20 This conclusion is akin to Matthen's (2010) idea that a feeling is characteristic of the attitude of remembering rather than of what is remembered. It differs insofar as Matthen explicitly endorses this claim only as regards episodic memory, appealing to a "feeling of pastness" that he contrasts with a "feeling of presentness" that accompanies perception.
- 21 The attitude of remembering may also target perceptual contents, as when something we see feels familiar. Discussion of this issue will have to wait for another occasion, however.
- 22 In what follows, I am exclusively concerned with the justification of these memory judgments. I am not interested in whether memory seemings can justify other judgments, such as the judgments *that one has been aware of the content, or that it is because one was aware of the content that it is now available*. For what it's worth, I think that these seemings can justify these beliefs.
- 23 This is of course not to say that appealing to memory seemings is the only option for internalists (see Teroni, 2014). Yet, they have by and large favored this approach to memory justification.
- 24 Lackey (2005) contends that memory can generate new justification. Yet, according to her, the situations in which memory does so are quite different from, and more complex than, those I discuss here, and the position she favors cannot in any case salvage the memory seemings account. Moreover, the sorts of situations

- she appeals to in support of her claim may fail to support it, as Senor (2007) argues. See also Teroni (2014).
- 25 See Tucker (2013) for a helpful introduction to the debate.
 - 26 This is a simplification, as the impression may originate in a situation in which, although one could have judged, one did not. As far as I can see, this does not affect the points I want to make here.
 - 27 In his discussion of phenomenal conservatism, which for present purposes can be understood as the claim that all seemings, memory or otherwise, confer *prima facie* justification, Tooley (2013) distinguishes basic seemings from derived seemings. His distinction is meant to restrict phenomenal conservatism to seemings that do not depend on the subject's prior cognitive activities, and he does so for reasons that are closely related to those presented here.
 - 28 One may think that appealing to constraints external to the memory seeming goes against the spirit of internalism (Hanna, 2011). This is questionable. For instance, the thought that there is a close relation between justification and the subject's responsibility for his beliefs, which often underscores internalism, does not support present-tense internalism. After all, we are responsible for distant consequences of what we have culpably done. This is why it is surprising that internalists such as Huemer (2007) never introduce an aetiological condition in order to ~~take on~~ the relevant seemings. For Huemer's own approach, which consists in distinguishing justified adoption and justified retention, see his (1999).
 - 29 Let me emphasize once more that I am interested in the epistemological role of feelings of familiarity and so, given the earlier claims, in the contribution of the attitude of remembering to justification. I do not claim that endorsing a memory content cannot be justified by something one is aware of when this content crosses one's mind. I want to insist, though, that in such cases one does not judge because one remembers.
 - 30 Hasan (2013) emphasizes the distinction between the psychological and epistemological roles of seemings, Bergman (2013) that between making intelligible and justifying.
 - 31 This may lead a friend of the option under discussion to distinguish the justification of propositional memory judgments, for which seemings are required, from the conditions under which these judgments constitute knowledge (Audi, 1995). This would amount to saying that, in this area at least, there can be knowledge without justification. I do not discuss this idea here, as it is not relevant for the issues I wish to address.
 - 32 In the same spirit, Conee (2013) writes that "absent defeaters, it is sufficient . . . to believe based on the evidence that prompts the inclination."
 - 33 Given the observations in the previous paragraph, one should insist that past reasons justify memory judgments only if these judgments causally depend on them. Sam must judge that Caesar was murdered because he heard his teacher say so. This basing relation is a natural addition to the past reasons theory. The relevant causal relation takes place independently of the subject's access to the past reason and more generally, of any psychological process taking place at the time of memory.
 - 34 For sophisticated versions of this theory, see Naylor (1971, 1982) and Bernecker (2010).

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