



## Mental Time Travel: Episodic Memory and Our Knowledge of the Personal Past (Life and Mind: Philosophical Issues in Biology and Psychology)

By Kourken Michaelian



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**Mental Time Travel: Episodic Memory and Our Knowledge of the Personal Past (Life and Mind: Philosophical Issues in Biology and Psychology)** By Kourken Michaelian

In this book, Kourken Michaelian builds on research in the psychology of memory to develop an innovative philosophical account of the nature of remembering and memory knowledge. Current philosophical approaches to memory rest on assumptions that are incompatible with the rich body of theory and data coming from psychology. Michaelian argues that abandoning those assumptions will result in a radically new philosophical understanding of memory. His novel, integrated account of episodic memory, memory knowledge, and their evolution makes a significant step in that direction. Michaelian situates episodic memory as a form of mental time travel and outlines a naturalistic framework for understanding it. Drawing on research in constructive memory, he develops an innovative simulation theory of memory; finding no intrinsic difference between remembering and imagining, he argues that to remember is to imagine the past. He investigates the reliability of simulational memory, focusing on the adaptivity of the constructive processes involved in remembering and the role of metacognitive monitoring; and he outlines an account of the evolution of episodic memory, distinguishing it from the forms of episodic-like memory demonstrated in animals. Memory research has become increasingly interdisciplinary. Michaelian's account, built systematically on the findings of empirical research, not only draws out the implications of these findings for philosophical theories of remembering but also offers psychologists a framework for making sense of provocative experimental results on mental time travel.



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## Editorial Review

### Review

Kourken Michaelian's book will be a milestone in the study of memory. This systematic investigation covers an impressive span of philosophical and psychological work on memory, and is both well-informed in cognitive science and nuanced in its conceptual treatment of the topic. Michaelian's treatise provides a framework that will shape the debates on memory and mental time travel in the years to come

(Jordi Fernández, Department of Philosophy, University of Adelaide, Australia)

In *Mental Time Travel*, Kourken Michaelian calls into question the intuitive assumption that memory is strictly about the past. In so doing, he offers a fresh multidisciplinary perspective into memory's constructive nature. Psychologists, neuroscientists, and philosophers who study the concept of memory should consider this volume essential reading.

(Karl Szpunar, Assistant Professor of Psychology, University of Illinois at Chicago)

To me, what is most exciting about this book is its demonstration that good philosophy and good science are not incompatible, that philosophy can inform science... and that science can inform philosophy.

(*Metapsychology Online Reviews*)

[T]his work has led me to consider questions that I had never thought about in my four decades of memory research. This is an essential book for anyone interested in memory.

(*PsycCRITIQUES*)

Michaelian's book is a very valuable contribution to the small, but growing, philosophical literature on what is perhaps the most intriguing of the various phenomena involved in remembering.

(*Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*)

...crisp and impressive.

(*The Philosophical Quarterly*)

### About the Author

Kourken Michaelian is a Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Otago, New Zealand.

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