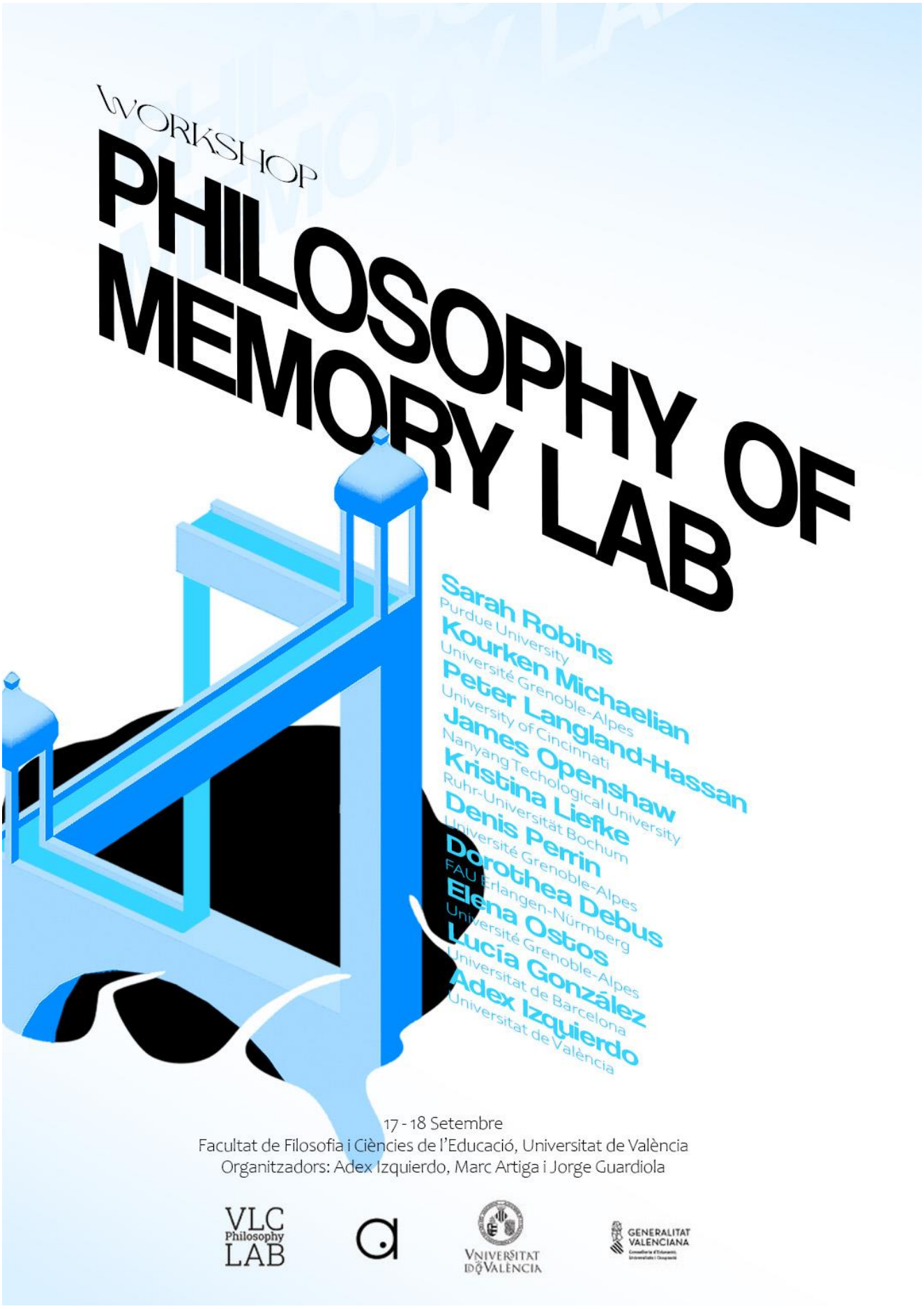

WORKSHOP
PHILOSOPHY OF MEMORY LAB
Sarah Robins
Purdue University
Kourken Michaelian
Université Grenoble-Alpes
Peter Langland-Hassan
University of Cincinnati
James Openshaw
Nanyang Techological University
Kristina Liefke
Ruhr-Universität Bochum
Denis Perrin
Université Grenoble-Alpes
Dorothea Debus
FAU Erlangen-Nürmberg
Elena Ostos
Université Grenoble-Alpes
Lucía González
Universitat de Barcelona
Adex Izquierdo
Universitat de València
17 - 18 Setembre
Facultat de Filosofia i Ciències de l'Educació, Universitat de València
Organitzadors: Adex Izquierdo, Marc Artiga i Jorge Guardiola
VLC Philosophy LAB
VNIVERSITAT DE VALÈNCIA
GENERALITAT VALENCIANA

THURSDAY 17

Saló de Graus

09:00 – 10:15	**Kourken Michaelian**	Université Grenoble-Alpes	***Remembering requires reliability: against Lai on mnemic reliabilism***
10:15 – 11:30	**Kristina Liefke**	Ruhr-Universität Bochum	***Pictorial accuracy: Lessons from the philosophy of memory***
11:30 – 11:45	**Coffee break**		
11:45 – 13:00	**Lucía González**	Universitat de Barcelona	***Cognitive Pathways Of Mnemonic Injustice***
13:00 – 15:00	**Lunch break**		
15:00 – 16:15	**Elena Ostos**	Université Grenoble-Alpes	***Generality and particularity in memory development***
16:15 – 16:30	**Coffee break**		
16:30 – 17:45	**Peter Langland-Hassan**	University of Cincinnati	***On the relation of episodic to semantic memory***

FRIDAY 18

Aula de Cristall

09:45 – 11:00	**Dorothea Debus**	Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg	***Temporal Dissonance and the Role of Recollective Memory in Understanding Ourselves as Temporally Extended Creatures***
11:00 – 12:15	**James Openshaw**	Nanyang Technological University Singapore	***Are episodic traces constitutive of reference in remembering?***
12:15 – 12:30	**Coffee break**		
12:30 – 13:45	**Sarah Robins**	Purdue University	***A Conceptual Ecology of the Engram***
13:45 – 15:45	**Lunch break**		
15:45 – 17:00	**Adex Izquierdo**	Universitat de València	***A Teleofunctional Explanation of Feelings of Familiarity in Episodic Memory Retrievals***
17:00 – 17:15	**Coffee break**		
17:15 – 18:30	**Denis Perrin**	Université Grenoble-Alpes	***De-idealising the causalism vs simulationism debate***

ABSTRACTS

KOURKEN MICHAELIAN

Remembering requires reliability: against Lai on mnemic reliabilism

This paper responds to Lai's (2024) attack on mnemic reliabilism, the thesis that remembering requires reliability, that is, that, if a given apparent memory is genuine, then it was produced by a reliable process, where a reliable process is one that tends to produce mostly accurate representations. Lai's argument against mnemic reliabilism unfolds in two stages: he first attempts to show that remembering does not require reliability in memory- impaired subjects, such as Alzheimer's disease patients, and then attempts to show that remembering does not require reliability in non-memory-impaired subjects, such as the participants in certain psychology experiments. The paper begins by arguing that the first stage of Lai's argument goes wrong by presupposing that a single process is responsible for producing Alzheimer's disease patients' apparent memories. It goes on to argue that the second stage of his argument goes wrong by overlooking the fact that the process that produces experimental participants' apparent memories tends to produce mostly accurate representations outside of the psychology lab. The paper concludes with a discussion of theses regarding the relationship between reliability and remembering related to but distinct from mnemic reliabilism.

LUCÍA GONZÁLEZ

Cognitive Pathways Of Mnemonic Injustice

Mnemonic Injustice (MI) (Puddifoot & Trakas, 2025) occurs when individuals are wronged by the operation of another's memory, typically through stereotype-driven distortions that undermine their autonomy. While current accounts of MI articulate its normative dimensions, they leave the underlying cognitive mechanisms unspecified. This paper bridges that gap. I classify MI as a subtype of Memory-Related Injustice (MRI) and, within this framework, I identify four cognitive pathways through which non-experience-derived, socially patterned information enters episodic reconstruction. At the level of input, Testimonial Injection occurs when prompt-derived content fills an experiential gap, while Trace Override involves such content displacing experience-derived information. At the level of background structures, Mnemonic Hijacking and Semantic Laundering exploit stored, stereotype-congruent data—either through the preferential selection and incorporation of harmful information during reconstruction, or through the episodicisation of autobiographical semantic memory, respectively. Mapping these mechanisms demonstrates that different loci of distortion generate distinct wrongs, entail different vulnerd.

KRISTINA LIEFKE

Pictorial accuracy: Lessons from the philosophy of memory

Recent work on episodic memory has identified a host of competing accuracy concepts (e.g. truth, authenticity, truth-and-authenticity, truth-or-authenticity, faithfulness). This differs from state-of-the-art work on pictorial representation, which only commands two such concepts, viz. actual truth (Goodman) and strict authenticity (Greenberg). My talk extends the small set of pictorial accuracy concepts by pictorial counterparts of the 'missing' mnemic concepts (e.g. pictorial truth-and-authenticity, pictorial faithfulness). In the process, it identifies a new class of accuracy concepts (incl. [possible] truth-and-projection). I show how some of these concepts (esp. pictorial faithfulness and truth-and-projection) improve upon the currently best concept of pictorial accuracy, viz. Greenberg's 'Three-Part Model'. I close by arguing that truth-and-projection is a promising candidate also for mnemic accuracy.

ELENA OSTOS

Generality and particularity in memory development

The notion of generic memory has gradually made its way into recent discussions of memory. Despite the differences across proposals, all of them share a synchronic approach that addresses generic memories from the perspective of mature cognition. This partly reflects the implicit assumption in the literature that generic memories arise relatively late in development, as a deviation from the normal functioning of the episodic system. In this talk, I will argue against this assumption and propose an alternative view according to which generic memories are developmentally prior to particular episodic memories. I will motivate this claim by drawing on behavioural studies in developmental psychology, on the one hand, and studies in cognitive neuroscience, on the other. For the former, I will mostly rely on the social interactionist paradigm, particularly on Katherine Nelson's work and developmental hypotheses. The latter will focus mainly on studies of the neural correlates of a range of memories that lie somewhere along the spectrum of episodic-semantic interaction, as well as on some promising frameworks for system differentiation. By bringing together findings from these different but related disciplines, I aim to offer a final picture in which generality in episodic memory is not a posterior product of some abnormal functioning of the episodic system, but rather a more primitive feature of memory from which particularity may have emerged.

PETER LANGLAND-HASSAN

On the relation of episodic to semantic memory

A key distinction in memory research is between episodic and semantic memory. While precise accounts of the distinction vary, the general idea is that episodic memory is memory of personally experienced past events, while semantic memory concerns general facts about the world. Despite its popularity, the episodic vs. semantic memory distinction has proven controversial since its introduction by Tulving (1972). A chorus of recent researchers has emphasized that the two kinds of memory are highly interdependent, closely intertwined, or simply two ends of a continuum with no bright line between them. However, these critical views all still presuppose two distinct forms of memory that can be intertwined or interdependent, or that can occupy distinct ends of a spectrum. In this talk, I push skepticism about the episodic/semantic distinction further in arguing that episodic memories are simply a subset of semantic memories and that, accordingly, they are no more "interdependent" or "intertwined" with semantic memories than beliefs about animals are interdependent or intertwined with beliefs about artifacts. Two arguments will be made to that effect. Both are, to my knowledge, rather unusual..

DOROTHEA DEBUS

Temporal Dissonance and the Role of Recollective Memory in Understanding Ourselves as Temporally Extended Creatures

TBA

JAMES OPENSHAW

Are episodic traces constitutive of reference in remembering?

TBA

ADEX IZQUIERDO

A Teleofunctional Explanation of Feelings of Familiarity in Episodic Memory Retrievals

The empirical findings of trace promiscuity and the increasing evidence of the reconstructive nature of retrieval have motivated a widespread shift away from the Causal Theory of Memory (CTM) toward simulationist and continuist frameworks. Because continuism treats episodic memory and imagination as fundamentally the same neurocognitive

SARAH ROBINS

A Conceptual Ecology of the Engram

Philosophers posit memory traces as mental states required for remembering, while neuroscientists appeal to engrams as the neural mechanism for retaining information in the brain. Developments in the philosophy of memory and in neurobiology have led to increased attention to memory traces and engrams, respectively, in recent years—and a collective tendency, across both fields, to use memory trace and engram interchangeably. This suggests their relationship is settled. I argue that it is not. Conflating memory traces and engrams has obscured important conceptual questions and slowed progress toward understanding either. After sketching the problem, I focus on the engram as a scientific concept. While many neurobiologists have long assumed that there are engrams, it is only recently, with the advent of tools like optogenetics, that it's been possible to identify them. Engram is thus something of a comeback concept, arguably far more popular now than at any point since its inception. This places it at a unique intersection of questions about enduring scientific concepts (atom, gene) and conceptual innovation in contemporary neuroscience. I use this framing to identify three distinct concepts of the engram operating in contemporary neuroscience, only one of which aligns with the memory trace.

DENIS PERRIN

De-idealising the causalism vs simulationism debate

In this talk, I argue against simulationist anti-causalism. In a nutshell, I first start by pointing out a tension within simulationism between its naturalistic and its definitional projects. I then argue that the best candidate way out for simulationism -- one that Michaelian (2016) himself suggests -- is to characterize its definition of episodic memory as an idealisation (Weisberg, 2007) of the neurocognitive reality of episodic memory. Now, if simulationism can avail itself of such a characterization, there is no good reason, I argue, for causalism not to be entitled to do so too. But if causalism too can present its own definition of episodic memory as an idealisation, then problematic consequences follow for simulationist anti-causalism. Ultimately, I submit, conceiving of the definitions offered by causalism and simulationism as idealisations drastically changes the battleground on which these two positions oppose with each other, and suggests that causalism wins.

process, it struggles to provide an objective distinction between the two, relying instead on subjective epistemic feelings to solve the process problem. In this paper, I defend discontinuism by proposing a consumer-side teleofunctional hybrid account of episodic memory that is fully compatible with constructivist evidence. I argue that mnemonic reference is preserved not by static, original traces, but by a subpersonal "unitracker" mechanism that actively validates the informational and historical lineage of substituted memory traces over time. Within this framework, the feeling of familiarity is explained as the phenomenological manifestation of the unitracker successfully tracking this objective causal chain. Ultimately, this hybrid account secures the boundary between remembering and imagining.