

Trent University
Philosophy Department Colloquium:

“Does episodic memory imply mentally travelling back in time?”

Dr. Marina Trakas

Wednesday, November 24, 2021
11:00am EST

Zoom Link:

<https://trentu.zoom.us/j/96254708374?pwd=STRWRXhib2JNM05PRnlWT0hqQ290UT09>

Passcode: 402314

Abstract:

Through the history of philosophical and scientific thought, different metaphors have been used to understand how memory works. Among them, the notion of mental time travel (MTT) appeared almost 40 years ago and has become in recent years a powerful metaphor widely used in science and philosophy of memory. In this talk, I explore the notion of MTT in order to determine if it is a good characterization of personal memory and, in particular, of its phenomenology. For this purpose, I compare it with the notion of time travel (TT): if the notion of MTT is supposed to explain personal memory and constitute a good metaphor, personal memory should be a kind of TT that takes place in the mind, so it should share similar properties with the notion of TT from which it originates. My analysis shows nonetheless that not only are there many dissimilarities between TT and MTT so that memory cannot be conceived as a TT that happens in the mind, but also that personal memory does not necessarily involve MTT. This raises serious concerns about the appropriateness and utility of the notion of MTT to characterize personal memory.

About Dr. Trakas:

Marina Trakas specializes in philosophy of mind and memory. She holds a PhD in Cognitive Science (Institut Jean Nicod - Ecoles des hautes études in social sciences, Paris) and PhD in Philosophy (Macquarie University, Sydney). She is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET), Argentina. She has published in English, Spanish and French philosophy and interdisciplinary journals including the journal of mind and behaviour, memory and phenomenological reviews.