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Narrativising Episodic Memory: From Memory Episodes to Micronarratives

Shaani Jag

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Abstract

In the current literature on Episodic Memory (EM), mental representations are often assumed to stand out as the main view that promises to explain how we experience past personal events. However, proponents of Radical Enactive Cognition (REC) have argued that this view is empirically and theoretically inadequate due to issues with misremembering - failure to recall events in the past accurately - and the Hard Problem of Content (HPC) (Hutto & Myin 2013, 2017). This thesis aims to utilise REC's already established framework and narrative formulations of memory to provide the tools needed to characterise episodic memory. The thesis turns to Narrativist Accounts (Gallagher 2008, 2003; Gallagher & Hutto 2008; Hutto 2016, Nelson & Fivush 2004; Rudd 2012; Schechtman 1996) and takes notice of the various capacities and requirements needed under these views and how they can serve as a model that can account for EM. However, under a Narrativist Account (NA), episodic memory is always embedded within autobiographical narratives. This raises the question of whether NAs can make room for any kind of episodic memory when conditions such as coherence, temporality and achievement of specific narrative capacities are required. By drawing from research on Dementia, Alzheimer's, PTSD and Depression, along with non-pathological scenarios, this thesis demonstrates that stronger and moderate narrativist accounts do not provide room for explaining episodic memory. I propose that episodic experiences of the personal past can be seen in a different light when understood as Micronarratives. Micronarratives are marked out by being fixed or resistant to updating while identifying with a particular event in the past, even if it is not in the form of an accurate or true description. I defend that episodic memory, in this view, is not confronted with the same problems and offers a viable alternative.

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Abstract

In the current literature on Episodic Memory (EM), mental representations are often assumed to stand out as the main view that promises to explain how we experience past personal events. However, proponents of Radical Enactive Cognition (REC) have argued that this view is empirically and theoretically inadequate due to issues with misremembering - failure to recall events in the past accurately - and the Hard Problem of Content (HPC) (Hutto & Myin 2013, 2017). This thesis aims to utilise REC's already established framework and narrative formulations of memory to provide the tools needed to characterise episodic memory. The thesis turns to Narrativist Accounts (Gallagher 2008, 2003; Gallagher & Hutto 2008; Hutto 2016, Nelson & Fivush 2004; Rudd 2012; Schechtman 1996) and takes notice of the various capacities and requirements needed under these views and how they can serve as a model that can account for EM. However, under a Narrativist Account (NA), episodic memory is always embedded within autobiographical narratives. This raises the question of whether NAs can make room for any kind of episodic memory when conditions such as coherence, temporality and achievement of specific narrative capacities are required. By drawing from research on Dementia, Alzheimer's, PTSD and Depression, along with non-pathological scenarios, this thesis demonstrates that stronger and moderate narrativist accounts do not provide room for explaining episodic memory. l propose that episodic experiences of the personal past can be seen in a different light when understood as Micronarratives. Micronarratives are marked out by being fixed or resistant to updating while identifying with a particular event in the past, even if it is not in the form of an accurate or true description. l defend that episodic memory, in this view, is not confronted with the same problems and offers a viable alternative.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis is entirely my own work except where I have given full documented references to the work of others, and that the material contained in this thesis has not been submitted for formal assessment in any formal course and the word length is 16, 231.

Shaani Jag - 09/05/2023

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Introduction

The ability to recall past experiences and events, i.e., episodic memory, has been the subject of extensive research. In much of the current literature in the contemporary philosophy of mind and cognitive sciences, Episodic Memory (EM) is construed as a form of memory that allows us to recollect events and experiences in our personal past. Two main families of accounts, Mental Representational Accounts (MRAs) and Narrativist Accounts (NAs) remain prominent within contemporary literature. Despite MRA's availability, this thesis intends not to explore the MRA account in-depth as it has been sufficiently addressed under Radical Enactive Cognition (REC), which will be adopted and utilised as the main framework for this thesis. Accordingly, REC criticises episodic memory under a mental representational reading and argues that embodied interactions with the environment that help shape cognition, provide a better framework for understanding memory (Hutto and Myin 2013, 2017, 2021). However, certain states are representational for REC when scaffolded by language and involve specific socio-cultural linguistic practices or 'narrative practices' (Hutto & Myin 2017, p.12). This thesis aims to follow the lead of REC's narrativist approach and establish a framework for characterising episodic memory, which has been briefly touched on by Hutto (2017), but not explicated in detail.

In Chapter 1, the thesis will present the current literature pertaining to episodic memory (EM) and its origins. It will provide insight into the current definitions of episodic memory and briefly describe mental representations. It will then discuss Radical Enactive Cognition (REC) and how it has established itself within contemporary literature. It will present an overview of the current empirical studies that have motivated REC and the Hard Problem of Content (HPC) against the mental representational view of episodic memory. The chapter will provide a rationale for the thesis' adoption of REC as the background framework for characterising Episodic Memory (EM) under a Narrativist Account (NA).

In Chapter 2, various narrativist accounts are explicated, focusing primarily on stronger and moderate versions. Both strong and moderate narrativist accounts are assessed and acknowledged as possible candidates for explaining episodic memory and assessed. In line with these views, autobiographical memory (AM) serves as a point of reference for developing our own identity by weaving stories about our lives. Rather than representing an isolated event, individuals weave episodes into a narrative, where this narrative itself, can be understood as involving representations as a linguistic device or tool. However, there are numerous concerns

with the stronger and moderate views in their inability to distinguish coherent self-shaping narratives and isolated events. To answer these concerns, various challenges are put forth, the Personal Identity and Episodic Self Challenge (Strawson 2004, 2020), the Multiple Story and Fragmented Character of Narratives Challenge (Lamarque 2004), and the Constraints and Capacities Challenge (Heersmink 2022). These challenges are necessary to probe whether strong and moderate (NAs) can properly characterise Episodic Memory (EM). However, in contrast to these two views, EM cannot be subsumed or absorbed into a coherent life story. There is too great of a distinction between strong and moderate views of memory, compared to isolated and independent episodes, for there to be room in such an account for an episodic form of memory.

The final chapter of this thesis, Chapter 3, argues that a weak narrativist embodied approach to episodic memory is a viable solution for characterising EM. Chapter 3 will begin by assessing the moderate embodied variants of the narrativist account and move on to weaker views to see whether they can offer a framework that features isolated events in the past. To drive this thesis further, empirical evidence from psychopathologies such as Dementia, Alzheimer's, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, (PTD) and Depression are discussed. Along with psychopathologies, everyday non-pathological theoretical examples are utilised to contend with the moderate embodied views. The empirical research and non-pathological cases are two challenges that identify that moderate embodied narrativist accounts are unable to respond to explaining isolated events and leave behind restrictive capacities and conditions required for stronger and moderate views.

Drawing from a weaker narrativist reading and embodied account of memory, this thesis proposes a solution in the form of 'Micronarratives'. It is argued that a Micronarrative Account (MA) offers a suitable alternative that can provide an explanatory framework for understanding and characterising episodic memories of past personal experiences while also considering pathological conditions. The end of Chapter 3 considers how Micronarratives can create fruitful options for potential research on episodic memory, and various avenues are explored concerning its application. Further research into other psychopathologies and collective forms of memory is also addressed. Lastly, contemporary research on isolated episodes and narratives concerning online communication and social media is discussed. The research further highlights the application of MA outside of philosophy and how it can provide the tools for new theoretical and empirical research possibilities.

Chapter 1
The Status of Episodic Memory

1. Introduction

Many theorists have sought to understand what it means to 'remember'. Representations, images, and snapshots are just some of the words used to describe how one may remember a past event. In much of the current literature in the contemporary philosophy of mind and cognitive sciences, Episodic Memory (EM) is construed as a form of memory that allows us to recollect events and experiences in our personal past. This has sparked controversy among philosophers and that 'mental representations' are not thought to provide a consistent framework for characterising EM. Radical Enactive Cognition (REC) sets the landscape and functions as the backbone of this thesis and highlights the theoretical challenges of viewing EM in this way. The chapter begins by focusing on the core features of episodic memory and a brief overview of the role of mental representations. Next, the chapter emphasises the links REC has made concerning the growing empirical literature on the problems associated with this view – mainly the problems of inaccuracy and misremembering. Moreover, REC presents a theoretical challenge courtesy of Hutto and Myin (2013, 2017): the Hard Problem of Content (HPC), which further highlights the problem of naturalising content that arises for content-based approaches to cognition.

Lastly, the chapter utilises REC's framework to set the stage for a narrative view of memory. According to REC, episodic memories are said to be embedded within an individual's autobiography. REC's narrative view of autobiographical memory appeals to different sources of empirical evidence to indicate that memory does not represent or recover information accurately. The chapter then concludes by suggesting that a narrative approach can provide an alternative explanatory framework for understanding past personal events that need not cast narratives as having truth or accuracy conditions.

2. What is Episodic Memory?

Our minds often wander back to specific events in our past. In fact, we might find ourselves thinking of past events that do not seem to be of particular significance. It may have been that time when we celebrated our sixteenth birthday with friends and ate so much chocolate cake

that we felt sick for the rest of the night. Alternatively, we may remember the time when we came home from school camp, and our dog ran over to us so fast that he knocked us over. These are just two examples of countless events that may occur in our lives, each subjective and different for all of us but related to past events, experiences, or scenarios. Over the years, the study of episodic memory has attracted the interest of many psychologists, cognitive scientists, neuroscientists, and philosophers. The conceptualisation and differentiation of episodic memory from other forms of memory can be ascribed to Endel Tulving.

Tulving distinguished episodic memory from semantic memory, observing that episodic memory notably focused on the recollection of past events and experiences, with semantic memory involving factual knowledge, symbols, and language (Tulving 1984, p. 222; see De Brigard, Umanath & Irish 2022 for contemporary sources summarising Tulving; see also Renoult & Rugg (2020)). In Tulving's view, episodic memory was defined as "a system that receives and stores information about temporally dated episodes or events, and temporal-spatial relations among them" (Tulving 1984, p. 223). Despite noting significant distinctions between these two types of memory, Tulving argued that they were both representational. More specifically, both were associated with "propositions about objects and their relations" (Tulving 1993, p. 14). This framing led to the overwhelming tendency in the literature today to characterise episodic memory as a form of mental representation. Mental representations can be described as snapshots or impressions of the world around us that describe or convey information about those events in a specific way. These representations can also be characterised as being accurate or inaccurate with respect to such events. When we think of an event in our past, we may believe that the specific details and information along with the event is retained within our minds and can be readily 'retrieved' after the event has long passed.

More recent accounts, coming from prominent figures in the philosophy of memory, also describe episodic memory as *a sui generis* form of memory that consists in storing (and accessing) information about one's past in the form of mental representations. According to Dennis Perrin and Stephane Rousset, episodic memory is a 'long-standing' form of memory where "human beings are equipped to retain information about their past, one – variously named "remembering", "recollection", "reminiscence" or "remembrance" – intuitively sets itself apart. It consists (in pre-theoretical terms) in reliving past autobiographical episodes as if one travelled back to them mentally and went through them anew in the form of *phenomenally rich mental images*." (Perrin and Rousset 2014, p. 292, emphasis added). Kourken Michaelian (2016) argues that episodic memory relies on Simulation Theory, where an individual essentially

'simulates' or 'imagines' a past event or episode (Michaelian 2016 p. 96). Michaelian further adds to this, stating "The only factor that distinguishes remembering an episode from *merely* imagining it is that the relevant *representation* is produced by a properly functioning episodic construction system which aims to simulate an episode from the personal past." (p. 97, emphasis added).

The definitions provided above give an insight into the continued work on attempting to discern and characterise episodic memory as a form of representation of someone's past and acting as a storehouse of information that can 'retain' and 'present' recollections. These various definitions have specific overlapping characteristics that speak of episodic memory as representations, products of the encoding and storing of past events. That is to conceive EM in terms of mental representations, the core commitment that REC argues against.

2.1 What is a Mental Representation?

Mental representations are commonly appealed to within philosophy of mind, psychology, and cognitive science. In fact, they are taken by many as a crucial explanatory tool (Crane 2003; Sterenly 1990). A mental representation can be understood as a 'mental phenomena' that is integral to cognition (Crane 2003, p. 11). While commitment to mental representations can be found within much of the literature on memory, the exact meaning of this notion is not always easy to understand. Mental representations are considered part of a broader cognitive structure that allows us to store and access information about objects and things (Stitch 1992, p. 5). They refer to objects, where these objects can be either physical or tangible, such as that tree in front of my window, my house, the Sydney Opera House, etc. (Crane 2003, p. 12). For example:

> When we are at home and thinking about the Opera House [in Sydney], a mental image or snapshot of the building becomes available to us, which is a *representation* of it (Smortchkova, Dolrega & Schlicht 2020, p. 2). In this case, the mental object that represents the Sydney Opera House when we think about it involves content for which the Sydney Opera House is about, e.g., performing arts, Sydney, and quirky architecture, and it will meet the satisfaction condition of being correct, only when we think about *it*, then say, when we think about a different place such as Taronga Zoo (Smortchkova et al. 2020, p. 2).

Thus, mental representations, refer to, and are about things that involve contents with semantic properties, such as meaning, reference or truth (Crane 2013; Smortchkova et al. 2020). Philosophers (Burge 2010, p. 20; Crane 2013, p. 24, Pitt 2022) have tended to argue that in order to be about something, mental representations must have two key features:

(a) They have content, i.e., what the representation is about.

(b) They have satisfaction or correctness conditions, where the contents can be understood as either true/false or accurate/inaccurate with respect to what they represent - what they are about or facts in the world.

With these important details laid out, we can proceed to the next section of this chapter, which will focus on the various empirical challenges that REC has reviewed regarding memory. The empirical evidence will cast doubt on the 'storehouse' model of memory, which involves the retention and reproduction of information in one's mind, according to which individuals can re-access past events by mentally retrieving or re-enacting specific mental contents.

3. Radical Enactive Cognition (REC) and The Hard Problem of Content (HPC)

Hutto and Myin (2013, 2017) question how cognition is currently understood in mainstream cognitive science and argue that it need not always and everywhere be characterised in terms of mental representations (Hutto and Myin 2017: 11, 45). Hutto and Myin (2013, 2017) argue that there are forms of cognition, i.e., basic cognition, that are entirely non-representational. For mental representation to be conceived in a naturalistically respectable way, Hutto and Myin (2013) argue that representationalists must explain how mental representations obtain their specific correctness conditions. They argue that representationalists have often attempted to naturalise content by appealing to information-as-covariance, but they have failed to provide additional conditions that a mental representation would need to meet to have content, namely, to specify accuracy conditions.

One particularly significant attempt to naturalise content is teleosemantics. Teleosemantics claims that misrepresentation is a certain kind of biological malfunction (Godfrey-Smith 2006). More specifically, misrepresentation occurs when a system fails to achieve its normal communicative function—the function by which it was selected (Godfrey-Smith 2007; Hutto & Myin 2017). The aim of teleosemantics is to demonstrate that the "inner states of organisms like us [humans] represent the world" (Godfrey-Smith 2006, p. 3) and can fail to do so

accurately. However, Hutto and Myin (2017) argue that failure of biological function does not provide accuracy conditions. This success or failure of biological function does not align with veridicality (truth) conditions or anything close to it. In Fodor's famous phrase: "Darwin doesn't care how you describe the intentional object of frog snaps…Darwin cares how many flies you eat, but not what description you eat them under". (Fodor 1990, p. 73, Hutto & Satne 2015, p. 529). While biological functions can enable some organisms to interact with the world around them, this does not mean that such 'functions', when successful, can effectively represent the world under some specific description or explanation (Hutto & Satne 2015, p. 529).

This mismatch between evolutionary success and correctness conditions has been highlighted by many (see Burge 2010 Chapter 2, Hutto & Myin 2013, 2017; Hutto & Satne 2015). Thus, as Hutto & Satne (2015) claim, the interest pervading teleosemantics has dwindled (Hutto & Satne 2015, p. 506). In contrast to teleosemantics, Hutto and Myin (2013, 2017, 2021) advocate for a non-representational, content-free view of basic cognition known as Radical Enactive Cognition (REC), where enactivism takes on board the impossibility of answering the Hard Problem of Content (HPC), contra naturalistic and information-processing views, arguing that cognition involves embodied interactions with the external environment and not the processing of mental contents (Hutto & Myin 2013, p. 67). These embodied interactions can be best understood as the way in which we engage with the world around us, either via our interactions with others or the external environment, which plays an integral role in shaping cognition without invoking any kind of contentful mental representations (Hutto and Myin 2013, 2017, 2021).

It is important to note that in REC's view, certain cognitive states are representational, but this is only the case when scaffolded by language and operating according to the norms of certain socio-cultural linguistic practices (Hutto & Myin 2017, p.12). Only by mastering these scaffolded practices can one have "the capacity for cognition that involves content" (Hutto & Myin 2017, p.12). Nevertheless, Hutto and Myin still argue that thoughts with content are not required for basic cognition and that much of our cognition can be explained through embodied activity alone (Hutto & Myin 2017, p. 12). Thus, considering a different approach, such as narrativist accounts of memory that involve social and shared practices, arguably needs to be considered (Hutto & Myin 2013, 2017).

4. REC's Empirical Challenges: Episodic Memory and Mental Representations

Proponents of REC further advance their view by drawing from a plethora of empirical evidence to demonstrate the problems associated with characterisations of episodic memory under a mental representational account. The following studies are utilised to highlight the problems associated with accuracy and misinformation:

Loftus (1979, 1974, 2005, 2019) conducted a series of studies on eyewitness testimony, which have been utilised in courtrooms to challenge the reliability of testimony based on personal recollection. One of many experiments focused on showing witnesses a video of a traffic accident, which was followed up with questions about the event (Loftus & Palmer 1974). The questions included changing minor details and using specific verbs or language when questioning eyewitnesses' post-event. Loftus and Palmer found that individuals were open to misinformation and highly malleable (Loftus and Palmer 1974). Concluding that events and memories from the past reported by eyewitnesses were either misrepresented or involved "tentative distortion" (Loftus 1979, p.xiii, Loftus & Palmer 1974). These findings by Loftus and Palmer (1974,1979) demonstrated that memory could often be viewed as reconstructive rather than passive retrieval.

Other research has been conducted on the accuracy of episodic memory. For example, the Misinformation Effect is another common occurrence whereby new information- 'misinformation'- is given to an eyewitness post-event, producing changes in memories as reflected in their reports (Pickrell, McDonald, Berstein & Loftus 2017, p. 407). Pickrell et al., (2017) and Frenda et al. (2011) conducted the following experiments showing this effect. In one experiment, researchers showed eyewitnesses either photographs or videos with new or different information about what they may have encountered at an event in the past (Frenda et al., 2011). Findings from these experiments showed that even the slightest changes in details could "produce astonishing false witness reports." (Frenda et al., 2001, p. 3).

Drawing from the above problem of misinformation, additional research by Wade, Garry, Read and Lindsay (2002) further undermines the view that remembering involves storing information that is then accurately presented. The experiments by Wade et al. called for using 'doctored images' to see whether false memories could be 'planted' as actual recollections (Wade et al. 2002). One photo featured two true events, and one fake image (a hot air balloon ride), which was repeatedly shown to children (Wade et al. 2002, p. 598). Through various activities, interviews and guided imagery exercises, the experiments found that 50% of subjects had

created false childhood memories (Wade et al. 2002, p. 602). Lindsay et al. (2004) conducted a similar experiment where the participants' parents provided photographs of two true events and one fake event. Students were asked to try and remember the three events from their childhood. The results revealed that over half of the participants (56%) reported that they had experienced a fake event when it was wholly fabricated (Lindsay et al. 2004). The higher rates of fabricated false memories and fake events above demonstrate problems with assuming that memory involves accurate recollections (Lindsay et al. 2004, De Brigard 2014).

Other research on temporal displacement brings attention to the lack of accuracy that affects how we remember past events. One example is the 'Telescoping Effect', which refers to how individuals perceive time inaccurately (Morwitz 1997, Neter & Waksberg 1964, Rubin & Baddeley 1989). Individuals may experience either backward telescoping or forwards telescoping. Backwards telescoping occurs when an individual perceives a more recent event as being in the more distant past, and forward telescoping refers to an individual who perceives a distant event as being more recent than it is (De Brigard 2014, p. 160). For example, an individual may believe that a birthday party they attended was two years ago, but after checking the invitation, it was only six months ago. This clearly shows that our memories of past events are often open to distortion, highlighting that episodic memory suffers from 'systematic inaccuracy' (De Brigard 2014, p. [1]).

According to REC, the myriad of studies highlighted above shed light on the implications of conceptualising the function of episodic memory as true and accurate under a mental representational. More so, questions regarding the reliability of episodic memories and systematic misremembering appear to be a common occurrence, raising questions about whether the overall role of this form of memory is to 'store' details about past events to be readily available for future access.[2] In this case, the mental representational view that argues

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[1] For an example of an initial contribution to the philosophical literature compiling empirical evidence on memory, see De Brigard (2014) and follow-up discussions in Hutto (2017).

[2] While various experiments and empirical evidence have been discussed, only specific studies have been selected from a vast selection. For further studies on memory distortion, see Garry and Wade (2005) regarding the formation of false narratives, Intraub and Richardson (1989) for the boundary extension illusion, and Garry et al. (1996) on the imagination inflation effect, and additional studies by Hyman, Husband & Billings (1995), Loftus & Pickrell (1995, and Loftus & Davis (2006) which further highlights the issues associated with truth and accuracy associated with the recollection of past events.

for a 'storehouse' model that retains information, would be, in other words, an 'unreliable' storehouse where memories can often become distorted, open to inaccuracy, and overturns the idea that contents are stored and retrieved for later use.

5. Memory Under REC: A Narrativist Construal

Narrative approaches tend to draw on narrativity's significant role in the construal of autobiographical memory. While the phenomenon of EM is related to isolated events in the past, autobiographical memory on the narrative construal is an integrated network of events that constitute a life story. Autobiographical memory is commonly associated with 'narrative' characteristics. A narrative can have various meanings or be associated with multiple properties. One prime example within the philosophy of mind relevant to narrative formulations is underlined by Goldie, who states:

> "A narrative or story is something that can be told or narrated, or just through in narrative thinking. It is more than just a bare annal of chronicle or list of a sequence of events, but a representation of those events which is shaped, organised, and coloured, presenting those events, and the people involved in them, from a certain perspective or perspectives, and thereby giving narrative structure - coherence, meaningfulness, and evaluative and emotional import - to what is related." (Goldie 2012, p. 2)

In this case, a narrative is not just about a good story or one that contains a beginning, middle, or end. It is about persons as narrators and the meanings we obtain from sharing and telling these stories about ourselves or our lives.

There has been much discussion regarding the importance of narrativity and various alternative accounts from those who defend a narrative view of memory. Hutto (2017), states that "autobiographical reverie – has a strong claim being indelibly narrative in nature" (p. 2). Under this construal, autobiographical memory takes on board a life story - a person understands the structure of coherent narratives by engaging in social interactions or stories and can grasp how the self can be distributed over time (Fivush & Reese 1992; Nelson & Fivush 2004; Smorti 2011). To understand various episodes in our lives in autobiographical remembering, an individual must be able to recognise the differences in these episodes and know how they come together (Smorti 2011). Understanding narrative structures and how episodes come together is paramount to autobiographical remembering.

The empirical evidence that REC highlighted above raised important questions regarding how we can understand our memory of personal events in our past. The misinformation effect, the telescoping effect, false memories, and distortion are just some examples of how our memory *truly* functions. Arguably, we cannot plausibly refer to memory as a system that functions as a 'storehouse of information' that provides us with access to 'accurate representations' of the past. There may be two issues that come to rise (a) that content may potentially be stored accurately, and then when we recover this 'stored' content, the process of recovering memory becomes distorted in the process, and (b) the content itself is 'stored' in an unreliable way and is, in other words, unreliable. Regardless of this notion of stored information, the is a major issue when taking on board the idea that our memory functions in a way that allows us to retrieve accurate and true past events. Simply put, if we have these issues, and there is current research are resisting this idea, then we should find another avenue for explaining episodic memory. Furthermore, Hutto (2017), a proponent of REC, advocates for the narrativist view and argues that "we are only able to raise questions about the truth or accuracy of our memories once we have learned the ropes of a particular kind of narrative practice" (2017, p. 27). Narrative construal's can be viewed as representational, involving content and accuracy conditions. Accuracy applies to narrative as they are embedded within language, meaning, and truth - important properties connected with narrative capacities. However, while various questions regarding accuracy in narratives may arise, contenders of REC argue that from a narrative point of view, the main concern is not about getting things *right* or whether the narrative is *true* (Hutto 2017, p. 26)[3]. The narrative view allows for flexibility, "a narrative is distinct from what it is a narrative of. To fail to maintain this distinction is to lose the distinction between, on the one side, language and thought, and, on the other side, the world" (Goldie 2012, p. 6).

On the narrative account, while the purpose can be seen as much the same, at attempting to convey faithful and truthful recollections of the past, empirical evidence and research have demonstrated that memory is too easily distorted and malleable to be accurate. It seems that "neither reproductive fidelity nor the truth of declarative memory seems adequate" in its ability to successfully explain past events and experiences (Campbell 2006, p. 365). Yet, since the point of a narrative is not to be true but to 'make sense' narratively of events in a lifetime, along with a number of other elements that also belong to the narrative and its use (social, emotional and instrumental dimensions matter here); the narrative account does not face the same

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[3] For further information regarding the narrative approach and a contribution to the literature motivating the view, see Hutto (2017).

problems as those who separate episodic memory from autobiographical memory and frame it as a 'mental representation' of the past. Moving forward, the thesis will view episodic and autobiographical memory as interrelated forms of memory. This will allow the thesis to continue paving the way for a much more promising narrative construal of episodic memory.

5.1 Narratives and Autobiographical Memory

When thinking of autobiographical memory, there is often an association with 'autobiography' — the story of either our lives or the lives of others. When an individual takes on the journey of understanding what their autobiography may be, they are examining their lives and the point in time in which they have lived (Warnock 1987, p. 113). Similarly, drawing on the point of autobiography, the story of a person's life, there is something unique about how we remember the events in our past and often place them on a timeline that represents our lives. There are diverse ways in which autobiographical memory can be defined; similarly, there is contention regarding a specific definition. There are various definitions of autobiographical memory, and they are important when considering how AM can make room for EM.

For some, autobiographical memory is a 'personal memory' and "refers to explicit recollections of past events and episodes in a person's history." (Sutton 2002, p. 376). For others, autobiographical memory is a form of declarative memory "that emerges across the preschool years that involves basic memory abilities, as well as a developing understanding of temporal relations, narrative, self and others, and mental states." (Nelson & Fivush 2004, p. 489). Though declarative, like other forms of memory, autobiographical memory is a distinct form of memory where language plays a crucial social-cultural role in its development (Nelson & Fivush 2004, p. 489). In addition, according to Berntsen and Rubin (2012), autobiographical memory allows individuals to remember events in their personal past and to plan their 'personal future' (Berntsen & Rubin 2012, p. 1). Doing so allows individuals to orientate themselves and become involved in the intricate and unique communities surrounding them (Berntsen & Rubin, 2012). Thus, they argue that this form of memory is "crucial for a sense of identity, continuity, and direction in life." (Berntsen & Rubin 2012, p. 1). This understanding of autobiographical memory focuses on the subjective self, unlike other kinds of memory (such as semantic, or episodic memory) (Nelson & Fivush 2004, p. 487). It differs from episodic memory (information about specific events in our personal past) and semantic memory, which involves basic knowledge and facts, e.g., who designed the Sydney Harbour Bridge, or skills, such as

how to drive a car or ride a motorbike. In this light, autobiographical memory is much more complex than both episodic and semantic memory as it involves narrative elements and includes our personal history of episodes over a lifetime (Nelson & Fivush 2004, p. 487).

6. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the current theoretical debates pertaining to the nature of episodic memory. It described the key features of episodic memory and its initial theoretical framing by Endel Tulving. The REC framework and view of episodic memory, under a narrativist rendering, were explicated. Using REC, the chapter highlighted the various theoretical and empirical challenges concerning mental representational approaches to episodic memory. In doing so, REC provided the conceptual motivation for moving forward and adopting a narrative view that does not fall short of the problems of accuracy. Next, the narrative view, which is frequently linked with autobiographical memory (AM), was discussed, and its relationship to episodic memory was outlined. In light of this finding, narrativist accounts of EM are the primary focus of this thesis and will be evaluated further in connection to AM in the following two chapters. Lastly, chapter 2 will explore various narrative formulations of, which involve specific capacities to characterise EM. Chapter 3 will put forward an alternative within NAs, the micronarrative account, and argue that it overcomes the problems of the standard NAs discussed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2

Narrative Accounts

1. Introduction

This chapter aims to explore Narrativist Accounts (NAs) by focusing on narrative characteristics to explicate further which capacities can help model Episodic Memory (EM). As such, not all narrativist approaches focus specifically on memory. By separating narrativist accounts into strong, moderate, and weak views of narrative capacities, this thesis will be able to define how they can account for EM. The chapter will begin by assessing the different views to explore which, if any, can provide a viable account that can inform a narrative account of EM. This chapter differentiates between and examines strong and moderate narrativist views of episodic memory. It also analyses their central arguments and whether they can serve as a suitable framework for characterising EM. While strong and moderate NAs provide insight into the current narrative frameworks, I argue that they fall short to various problems, namely, the Personal Identity Challenge and Episodic Self Challenge (Strawson 2004, 2020), the Multiple Story Challenge and Fragmented Character of Narratives Challenge (Lamarque 2004), and the Constraints and Capacities Challenge (Heersmink 2022). Next, the chapter will subscribe to current research on psychopathology and non-pathological cases, to demonstrate that they play an integral role in characterising EM. Lastly, it is argued that the central arguments from strong and moderate narrative accounts cannot move past their shortcomings to make room for episodic memory. However, a weaker narrative view may present a better framework for understanding episodic memory under a narrative account.

2. Strong Narrativist Accounts

Chapter 1 discussed the Radical Enactivist approach (REC) and highlighted the empirical evidence and problems associated with viewing episodic memory under a mental representational account. That is, empirical evidence demonstrated that our ability to remember the past is open to distortion - where truth and accuracy is not the real aim of our memory. The chapter saw fit to REC's already established framework, and its theoretical narrative approach was a crucial starting point for this thesis. Drawing from REC and Hutto (2008, 2013, 2017, 2022), this chapter will discuss the various classifications of different narrativist views in terms

of their strength. Hutto (2014) differentiates strong and moderate classifications of narratives, (i) strong narrativist accounts claim that self-shaping or self-constitution is linked to implicit narrativising, and that coherent self-experience is contingent upon living or experiencing our lives narratively, (ii) moderate views rely on narrative practices, or specific capacities, e.g., coherence and temporality, that are required to have autobiographical memory. However, no classifications have been created for a weaker view/s of narrative, which is distinguished in this chapter.

We will start with the strong view, according to which self-shaping involves coherent implicit narrativising. Anthony Rudd (2012, 2007) defends this strong view that narratives are essential to selfhood. Rudd claims that our 'continuing self-narrative' plays an essential role in shaping ourselves and setting up a trajectory for our future by reflecting on our past experiences. Self-experience, in this view, involves coherence and continuity, along with *implicitly* narrativising one's life, which is a necessary component for self-shaping and self-constitution. In this light, self-shaping can only occur through narrative, and these narratives are framed by teleological (the claim that human actions have purpose and direction), ethical (our self-narratives are linked to our evaluative and moral judgements), and ontological means (narratives give us access to the truth about persons). On this construal, the narratives we tell about ourselves unify and link our various actions and the events in our lives, making them part of a coherent whole (Rudd 2012, p. 181). Rudd argues that we construct implicit and proto narratives to create our own story as persons, where the narrative component presupposes a 'protagonist' (Rudd 2007, p. 62). For example, the story l tell about my life allows me to understand the reality of my own life and the socio-cultural environment in which l live and inhabit as a particular individual with a peculiar history and specific values, habits, and relationships. Thus, the narrative one tells about themselves provides not only reasons for how we must live our lives but our ethical and moral judgements that may impact how we live and shape our lives (Rudd 2012, p.184).

Framed as such, Rudd's teleological and ontological claims regarding narrativity and self-shaping do not provide a framework for explaining isolated events in the past. Rudd argues that "we cannot identify episodes or events apart from any narrative, and then use narrative to tie them together, like pearls on a bit of string. Episodes must be part of a coherent life story to provide insight into the individual's sense of personhood (Rudd 2012, p.185). Without coherence and integration, we would not be able to explain self-shaping. Instead, what gives structure to episodes is narrative unity, which is, in turn, articulated into an implicit story.

Nevertheless, since narratives are constitutive of and always about persons, providing substance to self-shaping, there is no chance for inaccuracy or isolated events to be explained successfully.

The second variant of the strong narrativist view endorsed by Marya Schechtman (Schechtman, 2011, 1996) argues that to understand personal identity, we should view persons as self-constituting entities, where a person can establish their own identity by forming an autobiographical narrative (Schechtman 1996). Schechtman proposes the descriptive view called the 'Narrative Self Constitution View' (Schechtman 1996, p. 164). The core of the account is to demonstrate that we achieve the four features of the psychological self and personal identity over time- i.e., survival, moral responsibility, self-interested concern, and compensation - through narrative means (Schechtman 1996, p. 164). Schechtman argues that individuals only come to figure themselves as 'persons and subjects through time by reflecting on their past, present, and future through narrative. (Schechtman 1996, p. 94).

Thus, in this view, the relationship between narratives and memories plays the most integral role in establishing both the identity and persistence conditions of a person. Similarly, autobiographical narratives and our autobiographical memories must demonstrate a high level of coherence to be considered identity-constituting (Schechtman 2011, p.98). As Schechtman claims:

> "Memory is not always or only a reproduction of past experiences or a simple connection between two discrete moments of consciousness. It is also a way of weaving the facts about ourselves and our histories into a coherent and intelligible story, expressive of the overall contours of our characters and our lives; our autobiographical memory is, that is, more like a biography than a photo album." (Schechtman 1996, p.12)

Much like Rudd, Schechtman argues that individuals constitute themselves by understanding their lives as narrative in form or having some form of 'narrative unity'. Obtaining this unity requires coherence, which is necessary for self-shaping, constitution, and 'the context of a whole'. Nothing can be understood as separate from a larger picture. We essentially "experience and interpret our present experience not as isolated moments but as part of an *ongoing story*." (Schechtman 2011, p. 398, emphases added).

From the above, we can see that strong narrativist formulations of what is required for self-constitution and personhood are entrenched in problematic claims that can be challenged. Firstly, both Rudd and Schechtman are committed to the claims that (a) individuals must see themselves as objects persisting through time, and (b) individuals must weave stories about themselves to be viewed as persons. If this is true, it follows that those who do not create narratives or stories about themselves or do not see themselves as persisting objects through time cannot be viewed as persons (Strawson 2004). Secondly, a crucial point for our inquiry here is that if a person cannot experience their lives as isolated events and require narrative unity or coherence, the account would be deemed unsuccessful in providing a viable explanation for episodic memory. Even if we can understand these isolated events that can be part of a broader story, they cannot be viewed as encapsulating any form of personhood. A successful narrativist account of episodic memory need not subscribe to specific conditions of personhood, overarching stories, and self-constitution to provide a sufficient explanation of isolated moments in our past.

Other proponents of stronger narrativist accounts draw from developmental psychology - this is the case of the Social Interactionist Theory (SIT). The Social Interaction Theory (SIT) argues that through social scaffolding and the development of narrative skills and competencies in the preschool years of life (between the age of 2-5), a distinct kind of memory develops in the form of autobiographical memory (Nelson and Fivush 2004, p. 490). It is claimed that autobiographical reverie is socially and culturally mediated, focusing specifically on "the telling and retelling of significant life events" (Nelson and Fivush 2004, p. 490). This social scaffolding occurs when parents focus on verbal discussions relating to past, present, and future events when conversing with their children. (Nelson and Fivush 2004, p. 490). Making sense of these conversations and discussions has come to emphasise the importance that language plays in how children understand that memories can be representations of past events and experiences, along with becoming the main tool utilised for narrative organisation and self-understanding (Fivush 2011, p. 564).

Following the steps of Rudd and Schechtman, SIT similarly interlinks memory and personal identity. Claiming that as children develop into the early years of adolescence, personal identity often becomes intertwined with narrative and autobiographical remembering (Fivush, Habermans, Waters and Zaman 2011, p. 321). The process of social scaffolding and further development of social cognition allows individuals to understand the importance of temporality and develop their understanding of narrative structure into an all-encompassing life narrative

(Fivush et al. 2011, p.321). By creating overarching autobiographical narratives, we can come to understand our pasts but also who we are as well.

However, the main challenge of this account is the same as the strong philosophical narrativist views. Namely, episodes are not viewed in relative isolation and "ultimately, autobiographical memory is about weaving together multiple specific episodes into an overarching life narrative that explains an individual life course." (Fivush et al. 2011, p.323-324). Autobiographical memory under SIT is an integrated network of events that constitute a life story. However, under this strong reading of SIT, those who do not have the relevant narrative skills and capacities to create full-fledged autobiographical narratives are unable to experience fragmented episodes from their life that continue to be relived, even narrated, and not fit into an entire life story. Simply put, SITs strong narrative account cannot explain such forms of episodic remembering.

2.1 Challenges for Strong Narrativist Accounts

In this section, I will present various challenges in objection to the stronger views of narrative accounts. While specific issues and challenges were raised above, providing a thorough critical analysis in line with the objections raised is necessary. Opposing views raised by Galen Strawson (2004, 2020) and Peter Lamarque (2004) are essential for proving why the stronger views fall short in their ability to explain episodic memory.

In what follows, l present what l call 'the Personal Identity Challenge' and 'Episodic Self and Memory Challenge'. To start with the Personal Identity Challenge, Strawson (2004) argues that narratives are not required to live a fulfilling, good, or ethical life. Strawson rejects two of the main theses associated with narrative self-theories: (a) the psychological narrativity thesis, the claim that humans implicitly and naturally experience their lives as a story, and (b) the ethical narrativity thesis, the claim that to live one's life as a narrative is important and integral to living a moral life and for true personhood (Strawson 2004, p. 429). The stronger narrative accounts of Marya Schechtman and Anthony Rudd endorse these claims. The two claims can be articulated as follows: (i) that human experience involves constructing and living a narrative, where this narrative is us and our identities, and (ii) that we ought to live our lives narratively, as a story (Strawson 2004, p. 430). To counter these theses, Strawson identifies two personality types – the Diachronic and the Episodic. The Diachronic is an individual who sees themselves as continuing over time – extending to the past and the future. By contrast, an Episodic does not reflect on the past or future and do not themselves as persisting over time (Strawson 2004,

p. 430). For Strawson, some individuals, such as himself, do not live their lives narratively. Instead, he argues that the weighting of narrative coherence and our narrative tendencies are not essential for self-experience.

Reflecting on our life is an important part of how we can form meaning and learn more about ourselves and personal identity through narrative. This is where the Personal Identity Challenge comes into play. For Strawson, narratives are not required to live a meaningful, fulfilling, or ethical life. Individuals do not need to live their life narratively or through stories to have a coherent sense of self-experience or to experience themselves as a self. Instead, subjects can be viewed as agents that do not require whole-life narratives to have an identity that construes part of who they are.

The stronger narrativist accounts cannot make room for the episodic self or episodic forms of memory – this is where the Episodic Self and Memory Challenge fits in. As Strawson states, there may be individuals, 'Episodics', who do not see themselves as persisting over time. He argues, "There are people whose memory of their own pasts is so garbled that they can no longer be said to have an adequate self-history, although they're not classified as mentally unwell." (Strawson 2020, p. 11). This may be the case for many individuals; however, the stronger accounts do not consider the potential for those who may be bad at coherently ordering events in their lives, let alone those suffering from psychopathological or cognitive conditions that may affect memory. Often, there may be no progression between events; if this is the case, no coherent narrative is needed to link events together (Strawson 2020, p. 20). We may experience certain moments in our lives that are non-narrative and do not need to be part of any overarching narrative as they hold no important meaning, or the details or these memories have been forgotten (Strawson 2020, p. 20).

Peter Lamarque (2004) presents two challenges for the stronger views, the 'Multiple Story Challenge' and the 'Fragmented Character of Narratives Challenge'. While narratives in the strong views are seen as self-constituting, defining personal identity, and providing the truth about who we are highlights that there are faults associated with narrative structures. Lamarque argues that we may have numerous narratives or stories to tell regarding the different events in our lives (Lamarque 2004, p.405). This is the 'Multiple Story Challenge'. For example, we may change a narrative about certain events to different people, depending on the context, to whom it is directed, or the overall aim of why we are telling the narrative. An individual may tell the stories of the day-to-day events of their week to a close friend very differently from someone

at a professional event. Due to our ability to retell multiple stories for various notable events, the overall importance placed on whole-life narratives in their role of self-constitution and personal identity is problematic. In contrast to larger unified narratives, we tend to focus more on the important or specific moments in our lives that carry meaning and genuine significance. Lamarque contends with stronger views that place an emphasis on narrative as self-constituting, arguing that only in very few cases do people come to establish comprehensive and well-rounded biographies or autobiographies (Lamarque 2004, p. 405).

Not only do we tell multiple stories, but there may also be disjointed narratives that lack consistency or hold little importance in the grander scheme of things (Lamarque 2004, p. 403). This is the 'Fragmented Character of Narratives challenge'. If we have more than one narrative to tell, there would be a greater impact on how we constitute ourselves and our identity - they would be cluttered, disorganised, and lack coherence. While we may tell these stories or narratives, they would ultimately be fragmented, inaccurate, embellished, and flexible (Lamarque 2004, p. 404). For Lamarque:

> "Fragments of narrative, sometimes in conflict with each other, are no basis for an account of personal identity of the unity of a life. The impression given by the term 'narrative' is of a complete, rounded story with a beginning, middle and end that helps make sense of complex events […] But personal narratives virtually never attain completeness, closure, or unity. (Lamarque 2004, p. 405).

The stronger accounts, whether in Schechtman, Rudd or SIT versions, cannot account for how ambiguous and complicated narratives are. We are susceptible to forgetting (see Chapter 1 for details), to claim that we remember an entire life story accurately and coherently would be implausible and to state that it is a prerequisite for the composition of selves, persons, and identity is 'otiose' (Christman 2004, p. 697). Rather, it seems adequate to say that what we narrate are 'life fragments', specific moments, and episodes that we have chosen, and are "a clip of narration ordering isolated sequences of events" (Lamarque 2004, p. 405). There may be fragmented episodes from an individual's life that continue to be narrated and relived that do not fit into an entire life story and, consequently, can be isolated and separate from one's autobiographical memory. In this reading, Lamarque provides a much more plausible explanation of how narrativist accounts of memory can make room for episodic memory. Potentially, a moderate view of narrative remembering that differs from the strong views in the relevant respects may do better. I shall discuss these views in the following section.

3. Moderate Narrativist Accounts

This section will assess moderate narrativist accounts, firstly addressing a revised account presented by Schechtman (2007) and a second account by Shaun Gallagher (2012, 2007). Schechtman (2007) presents a more moderate account after facing various challenges by Galen Strawson (2004). According to Schechtman, the four features outlined in her previous stronger account above (see section 1) remain relevant and just as important to demonstrate that the self is indeed psychological (Schechtman 2007, p. 164). Schechtman's initial account focused on how the four features require self-narratives to achieve self-experience, where person and self are synonymous. After considering Strawson's objections, she distinguishes persons and selves (Schechtman 2007, p.169). She claims:

> "When the narrative view of person and the narrative view of self are distinguished from one another and the sense of narrative relevant to each carefully specified, each is compatible with what [is] described as the Episodic lifestyle." (Schechman 2007, p.175, emphasis added)

On this softened version, individuals can be tied to these two notions to varying degrees. Schechtman still emphasises the importance for an individual to be as "strongly identified as possible with the whole of her narrative, a tightly woven self-narrative making for a stronger person than a weaker one." (Schechman 2007, p. 176). Moreover, she describes two constraints, the 'reality constraint' and the 'articulation restraint', that apply to the constitution of individuals. For the real constraint, individuals need to be grounded in some form of reality, e.g., understanding that we cannot exist in two places simultaneously (Schechtman 2007, p. 163). The articulation constraint holds that an individual can answer specific questions without feeling a sense of confusion or loss, for example, being able to explain what you did at work the day before (Schechtman 2007, p. 163). Nevertheless, according to Schechtman, self-narratives and persistence conditions can still be viewed as helpful in living deeper, more meaningful lives that are not isolated and alienated (Schechtman 2007, p. 177).

Given the problems that Marya Schechtman's view faces, we need to move away from the notion of narrative as self-constituting and involving unity. Gallagher (2012) does precisely this. However, he remains committed to a view that encompasses the significance of continuity. Gallagher argues that some capacities we have *contribute* to our narrative skills to create self-narratives: (i) temporal ordering or the ability to sequence and order events, (ii) the capacity for minimal self-reference – the ability to engage in action, recollect experiences and reflect on the

actions taken (iii) episodic and autobiographical memory or the ability to recollect events in the past and when they occurred, and (iii) metacognition, which is required for self-reflection, obtaining meaning from experience and how events link together (Gallagher 2012, p. 176-179). Underscoring the stronger accounts, Gallagher agrees that narratives are an integral part of our lives, and through the stories we tell, we come to create 'our selves' (Gallagher 2012, p. 173). Yet, the selves we create are an accumulation of various stories; these stories we tell about ourselves are "about actions and events that occur over time and in the larger context of the world." (Gallagher 2012, p. 174). This story includes our ability to understand where we are, how we have changed over time, and where we see ourselves going in the future.

While Gallagher stresses the importance of continuity, some central ideas are explicated further. Gallagher emphasises the complexity of self and narratives, he states, "The self-acts as a conduit that allows us to find further meaning and understand our lives, and when these narratives are fractured, and we cannot make sense of them as we should, they can be markers for psychopathologies" (Gallagher 2008, p.213). Unlike the stronger narrative accounts, the moderate account presented by Gallagher sees the central features of narrative as holding meaning while taking advantage of how it can assist us in understanding the differences between those who can and cannot situate themselves using narrative. Accordingly, a focus is placed on individuals affected by schizophrenia who experience a form of disconnect in their self-narratives (Gallagher 2008, p. 224). Gallagher claims that these self-narratives often lack rationality and involve fragmentary or partial thoughts, suggesting that there may be an issue with the four capacities needed for narrative proficiency (Gallagher 2008, 224).

For Gallagher, these narratives fail for those with schizophrenia due to an issue with their 'content or structure' (Gallagher 2007, p. 216). There is more to understand and interpret when deciphering *how* or *why* these self-narratives are no longer connected and lack consistency. He maintains that:

> "On the one hand, the content of self-narrative is provided by autobiographical memory and our actions, but content is also shaped by expectations and plans. Without content, narratives are impoverished. The contribution of autobiographical memory to self-narrative content is significant, as is apparent from cases in which such content is lost, as in amnesia or Alzheimer's disease." (Gallagher 2007, p. 216)

This implies that Gallagher accepts this to be an issue with content and structure that steers us in the direction of understanding how our self-narratives go wrong. It is here that an important

aspect of this thesis comes to light. That *content* is a vital part of our autobiographical memories and narrative capacities. However, whether this form of content is linguistically and socially scaffolded, contra to representational and cognitive mechanisms, is difficult to comprehend on Gallagher's account.[4] Gallagher's account does not provide separate definitions of autobiographical or episodic forms of memory. Moreover, he argues that the temporal ordering of events is an important aspect of understanding narratives and crucial for "capabilities that involve minimal self-reference and episodic-autobiographical memory." (Gallagher 2007, p. 217). But what is episodic-autobiographical memory on this account? Gallagher further claims that "the capacity for minimal self-reference is necessary for the proper working of episodic and autobiographical memory, which involves the recollection of a past event and when it took place, and self-attribution, the specification that the past event involved the person who is remembering it." (Gallagher 2007, p. 209). He emphasises that "episodic memory is necessary for the construction of the narrative self" and that it impacts minimal-self reference (Gallagher 2007, p. 209). On his account, it is not clear whether both forms of memory are equated or separated. No further clarification or varying characteristics for the two forms of memory are provided. If this is the case, it is unclear whether episodic memory, on this view, is narrative in kind or whether the two forms of memory are different.

3.1 Psychopathology and Narrative Structure

Drawing from the moderate views above, specifically Gallagher's focus on narrative and schizophrenia, this section will examine the interactions between the role of narratives and psychopathology. Psychopathology has numerous effects on memory, or how we remember past events. It is crucial to provide an account that considers those who cannot structure coherent narratives about themselves or their lives. As Gallagher (2007) demonstrated above, it is important to note and take stock of the fact that individuals cannot engage in basic narrative capacities when affected by certain cognitive and psychopathological conditions. The key to understanding episodic memory may lay in how narratives work in the case of those who have Dementia, and Alzheimer's, to the less severe psychopathologies and emotional disorders of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Depression.

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[4] While Gallagher (2007) presents a moderate account, when combined with his works in these other areas, the view could be taken to put forward a weaker view, as the ones presented in Chapter 3. The analysis of Gallagher's work in other areas is beyond the scope of this thesis but see Chapter 3 for an analysis of a weaker view.

In the case of Alzheimer's and Dementia, we can understand that these forms of psychopathology are characterised precisely by patients not being aware of misremembering episodes in the past. Disturbances in episodic memory are often intertwined with autobiographical memory or the story of one's life, sense of self, temporality, and coherence. According to Breijyeh and Karaman:

> "Alzheimer's disease (AD) is a disorder that causes degeneration of the cells in the brain, and it is the main cause of dementia, which is characterised by a decline in thinking and independence in personal daily activities, […] dementia can be defined as a slowly progressive neurodegenerative disease […] Alzheimer's disease, which can be diagnosed by dementia […] is confirmed by neuropsychological tests, progressive memory loss, impaired daily-life activity, and other symptoms like aphasia (impairment of a language), apraxia (a motor skills disorder), and agnosia (a loss of perception)". (Breijyeh & Karaman 2020, p. 2 -3).

Further research highlights, "[t]here is a link between the perception of time and memory function in those with Dementia. Family members often report their loved ones with Dementia sometimes live in the past, even reverting back to first languages" (Keage & Loetcher (2015). Using this as an example, it is clear that those who have Dementia are not experiencing a coherent or uni-directional story of their lives.

However, this can also be the case for those suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or depression. Empirical evidence on PTSD and memory demonstrates that those who have PTSD re-experience specific episodes from their past or have difficulty remembering specific events in the past. For example, according to Lapidow and Brown, "PTSD has been long associated with alterations in autobiographical memory. In addition to those memory-related symptoms of PTSD found in the diagnostic criteria, such as intrusive memories and flashbacks, researchers have found that individuals with PTSD tend to have difficulty recalling specific moments from their past" (Lapidow and Brown 2016, p. 132). It is important to note that many individuals that have PTSD or depression may also experience or relive many of their memories or recollections of past episodes when awake during day-to-day activities or in the form of nightmares (Kohler et al. 2015).

Suffering from depression may lead individuals to experience a bias and to recollect specific memories from their past negatively (Kohler et al. 2015, p.3). Moreover, individuals may retrieve or recollect unpleasant or disturbing memories and, in turn, often interpret them in a

skewed light (Kohler et al. 2015, p. 3). According to Kohler et al., "These events can be re-experienced and become stuck as negative memories for the individual." (Kohler et al. 2015, p. 3). If this is the case, it raises concerns about how we understand ourselves and our identities over time.

Thus, a broad range of empirical evidence shows that people can suffer from various cognitive deficits or psychopathologies that affect remembering. When looking at narrativist views of memory, we need to be reflective of how these views strictly focus on individuals who can meet specific narrative conditions, e.g., coherence, implicit narrativising, and self-shaping, to be considered persons or to weave meaningful autobiographical narratives. These views are problematic, as they do not consider a larger population of individuals that do not have the necessary skills to do so. Many individuals worldwide suffer from some form of minor or severe psychopathology. Within Australia, 44% of individuals between the ages of 16 – 85 have experienced a mental disorder (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2020-21). Moreover, approximately 64,000 individuals aged 18 – 64 have suffered from a psychotic illness (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2020-21). This thesis aims to examine the validity of stronger, moderate, and weaker views and whether they consider the larger populations of individuals suffering from psychopathological issues. Moreover, questions regarding ordinary individuals and problems with memory need to be considered. For example, even for 'normal' or 'non-pathological' cases, memory might work in ways that are not ideal, such as under stronger NAs.

3.2 Criticism and Scepticism – Challenges to Moderate Narrativist Accounts

To finalise the chapter, as a final critical point on Schechtman and Gallagher's moderate views, I will draw from critical analysis and further empirical evidence compiled by Richard Heersmink (2022) to raise the 'Constraints and Capacities Challenge'. For Heersmink (2022), diseases such as Dementia and Alzheimer's significantly impact cognition and individuals' abilities to link significant memories in their lives (Heersmink 2022, p. 1). Heersmink argues that autobiographical memories can be viewed as shortened or encapsulated versions of experiences (Heersmink 2022, p.1). Much of the time, individuals who have Dementia and Alzheimer's will often articulate erroneous and implausible narratives that cannot be 'identity-constituting' (Heersmink 2022, p.3). Nevertheless, there is enough evidence to point to autobiographical memory being unreliable and not accurately presenting the past (Campbell 2006, p. 363). Heersmink then challenges Schechtman's articulation constraint, stating, "On the

articulation constraint, one has to be able to articulate or think through some minimal version of one's narrative. This does not mean that one can "coherently verbalise or think through one's entire life story or has written an elaborate autobiography." (Heersmink 2022, p. 3). Yet, criticising even the weaker version of the articulation constraint, Heersmink refers to research by Mills (1997):

> "Mills found that the eight Alzheimer patients she interviewed still have some sort of narrative. It is, however, fragmented; events are not always represented in chronological order, essential life events are missing, and there is usually repetition in how they tell their life story." (Mills 1997, p.7)

Moreover, if these memories are stuck in time, and an individual relives them, much like in the case of PTSD or depression, the real constraint on Schechtman's view would be redundant. For example, an individual may believe they are either reliving the same event from their childhood or have no plausible way to provide accurate details for the correct date or time in which they exist. At times, individuals have autobiographical memories that are not linked or cohesive, and to make them more intelligible, they may confabulate or create 'micro-narratives on the spot' (Heersmink 2022, p. 8).

Moreover, Gallagher's view that involves four specific capacities for narrative memory (temporal ordering, minimal self-reference, ability to recollect events in the past when they occurred and metacognition) can be called into question when looking at Alzheimer's and Dementia. As Heersmink claims:

> "The building blocks of this narrative are autobiographical memories that are meaningfully connected into a narrative structure. Alzheimer's disease and other forms of Dementia negatively impact various cognitive capacities, including autobiographical memory. If Dementia disintegrates a person's autobiographical memories and if these memories constitute the narrative, then Dementia also disintegrates one's narrative identity." (Heersmink 2022, p. 1).

It would then follow that individuals would have limited ability for the four capacities. Yet, this is not the case. For example, minimal self-reference and temporal ordering capacities persist. Moreover, not all individuals have the same understanding of what it is to be a person with a temporally extended existence who can feature in an autobiographical narrative and understand themselves through time. Many individuals, whether pathological or not, may not take part in

any form of re-reflective activities or deliberate the meaning of past experiences or how they 'fit' together.

An important conclusion follows from the preceding analysis. There may be fragmented episodes from an individual's life that continue to be narrated and relived that do not fit in an entire life story, and consequently, can be isolated and separate from one's autobiographical memory, much like in the case of Alzheimer's, Dementia, PTSD, Depression, or the non-pathological individual who remembers an episode in their lives. In the non-pathological case, there are instances when we may fixate on a particular event. We may have issues integrating them into a larger life narrative, and in turn, these events remain as episodes and do not require to undergo any coherence or truth-abiding assessment.

It is clear that strong NAs cannot deal with the issues of inaccuracy due to their emphasis on narrative self-shaping, strict coherence conditions and ontological means for providing the truth about persons. It appears that moderate and weaker views can make room for narratives that do not involve fixed truth or accuracy conditions and can involve errors, falsities, and mistakes. Moreover, a weaker view that draws from moderate accounts may work as an alternative that considers features of narratives to be fragmented, false, or isolated, without relying on the conditions imposed by the specific constraints and capacities highlighted in turn by Schechtman's and Gallagher's accounts. This kind of weaker view will be analysed in Chapter 3.

4. Conclusion

The current chapter has outlined the debates concerning episodic and autobiographical memory under strong and moderate narrativist formulations. The chapter started by covering the key features and variations of the claims associated with both the strong and moderate narrativist views. Each account was considered and assessed for its ability to explain episodic memory. Stronger views were unable to meet the challenges presented by both empirical evidence and theoretical argumentation. Drawing from Heersmink's (2022) analysis of memory and a variety of empirical research on memory in pathological cases, this chapter suggested that a possible way forward is to entertain a weaker narrativist account of episodic memory. Countering the challenges presented in this chapter requires further work and assessment. The final chapter will review weaker narrativist accounts of episodic memory to assess whether they can provide a viable theoretical framework for its study.

Chapter 3

Memory Episodes and Micronarratives

1. Introduction

The final chapter of this thesis will examine the weaker views of narrative accounts of memory. In Chapter 2, stronger and moderate narrative accounts were discussed at length, however, both were presented with unsolved challenges to explain episodic memory. These challenges included the Personal Identity Challenge and Episodic Self and Memory Challenge (Strawson 2004), the Multiple Story Challenge and Fragmented Character of Narratives Challenge (Larmarque 2004), Constraints and Capacities Challenge (Heersmink 2022). This final chapter aims to critically assess the weaker Narrativist Accounts (NA), exploring whether they can provide a framework for characterising EM. To test the strength of the weaker accounts relative to stronger and moderate accounts, the chapter will consider whether they can respond to the challenges by Schechtman (2011), Gallagher (2012), Strawson (2004, 2020) and Lamarque (2004) that were presented in the previous chapter. Next, this chapter will demonstrate that a weaker version of NA that conceives EM under REC or embodied forms of memory can provide a fruitful framework for characterising EM. This chapter adapts and augments Heersmink's (2022) analysis of EM and proposes a solution in the form of the Micronarrative Account (MA). However, some challenges still target MA, and will need to be addressed, these include the Coherence Challenge, The Episodic Self and Memory Challenge (2004), and the Multiple Story Challenge (Lamarque 2004). It is demonstrated that MA can respond to these challenges and effectively answer the criticisms raised. Lastly, potential future research options for MA will be entertained to demonstrate its value.

2. A Weak View? Embodied and Enactive Remembering

Embodied accounts of memory hold that we can often perform cognitive tasks, including remembering, more effectively by using our bodies and even parts of our surrounding environments to offload storage and simplify the nature of cognitive processing (Sutton & Williamson 2014, p. 315). Embodied cognitive science aims to understand the full range of perceptual cognition and motor capacities we possess, cognition in the broad sense, are capacities that are dependent upon features of the physical body. In essence, embodied cognitive science appeals to the idea that cognition deeply depends on aspects of the agent's body other than the brain (Sutton and Williamson 2014, p. 315). Along these lines, embodied accounts of

memory emphasise how the body interacts with the world in remembering previous experiences (Trakas 2021, p. 2). For example, interacting with others, such as our close friends, at specific events. While embodied memory offers some explanation, further clarification on its relationship with episodic memory is necessary (Trakas 2021, p. 2). This highlights various formulations of embodied remembering and one main caveat that needs to be considered – a complex account of memory contended by Daniel Hutto and Erik Myin – proponents of Radical Enactive Cognition (REC) (2013, 2017, 2022).

According to REC, remembering can be understood as a way of establishing 'on-the-fly construction' that is "grounded in structural synaptic changes in the brain as well as other structural changes in the environment without assuming the existence of stored and retrieved contents." (Hutto & Peeters 2018, p. 104). REC contends that there is no true theory or way to understand information as having content simply by relying on biological functions or causal covariances, and that talk of the brain or organism "processing" information is likely a misnomer or mere metaphor (Satne 2014, p. 202). On the other hand, REC offers another explanatory approach that allows for contentful representations only when certain cognitive states are correctly socioculturally scaffolded; these require specific narrative skills or social-cultural practices (Hutto & Myin 2017, p. 206). Hutto characterises narratives in the following way:

> "We have in mind only those [narratives] of the purely discursive variety - i.e., those complex representations that relate and describe the course of some unique series of events, however humble, in a coherent but selective arrangement." (Hutto 2017, p. 1).

In *Memory and Narrativity* (2017), Hutto takes up the challenge of explaining what he refers to as 'pure episodic remembering' on enactive and embodied terms. Embodied forms of remembering on his construal do not "require representing any specific past happening or happenings, and especially not representing these *as* past happenings." (Hutto 2017, p.4). However, Hutto does state that "there are 'explicit' forms of contentful remembering that may take place in an autobiography, and these require reference to facts about specific episodes in one's past and involve narratives" (Hutto 2017, p. 4).

Hutto takes up a moderate narrativist approach that relies on narrative practices and the appropriate cognitive scaffolding, as argued under REC, to explain autobiographical memory. He draws from proponents of the Social Interactionist Account (SIT) to motivate his view. Proponents of SIT, (discussed in chapter 2), argued there to be a type of memory,

autobiographical memory (AM), that is specifically 'narrative' in kind. Accordingly, autobiographical memory is always modulated by mastering sociocultural narrative capacities. While this may be the case, Hutto argues that SIT comes in two waves: strong and weak.

On a weaker construal of SIT, the narrative skills needed *do not* form or are responsible for the formation of autobiographical memory; they assist children to "improve and cement whatever content memories already have" (Hutto 2017, p. 11). In other words, Hutto states, "On this construal, memories with autobiographical content would be initially formed and stored even though they would be hard to faithfully recover until they are embedded in narratives." (Hutto 2017, p. 196). However, According to Hutto, SIT is inclined towards a stronger reading where AM depends on the mastery of narrative practices that a child learns from a caregiver, allowing them to make claims about the past and "what it means to be a person with a temporally extended existence who can feature in an autobiographical narrative" (Hutto 2017, p. 9). On SIT's construal, *only with* the mastery of narrative skills can a child then come to truly recall the past. However, Hutto argues that, if this is the case, then *without* these narrative practices or skills, "there is no pre-existing autobiographical content to our memories to be enhanced prior to our learning to narrative the past" (Hutto 2017, p.12). Moreover, if a person is unable to take part in these skills at a younger age, it would then follow that the individual does not have the aptitude or the ability to have any form of AM.

Drawing from the above, if a strong view of SIT is followed, it creates the issue of whether there is any form of EM (Hutto 2017). Hutto highlights a significant discrepancy for SIT and their formulations of AM and EM - misconstruing what episodic memory is. If episodic memory is a form of autobiographical memory, it would follow that it is unavailable before 2 – 5 years of age, as autobiographical memory only develops with the required narrative skills and capacities (Hutto 2017, p. 11). Hutto then argues that a sense of 'self' would need to be possible prior to any narrative capacities or practices for narrating the past.

Hutto attempts to remedy the situation and make room for episodic remembering, drawing from the Simulation Theory (ST) of episodic memory. For ST, episodic memory is viewed as a form of memory that re-creates or simulates imagining possible episodes of the past (Michaelian 2016). Episodic memory on a simulation account is really a matter of generating "self-centred mental simulations about possible events that we think may happen or may have happened to ourselves" (De Brigard 2014). Hutto (2017) then proposes that no issues arise from misremembering on these two accounts, for simulations need not be true or accurate, and they

"lack inherent correctness or congruence conditions" (Hutto 2017, p. 221). Additionally, the simulationist view does not need to be taken up in a strongly representational fashion but can be remodelled under an embodied and enactive account.

Hutto's proposal of combining strong SIT with a Simulation theory may prove useful for explaining that there is some form of memory prior to the development of autobiographical memory (Hutto 2017, p.14). He empathetically rejects any need for memory to be about faithful representations of the past or about truth and accuracy (Hutto 2017, p. 26). Might the simulationist account of EM, when formulated in terms of embodied and enactive cognition, help us address these worries? In the next section, I argue that this is not the case.

3. The Hard Problem of "No" Content

The central point for enactive forms of memory is that individuals "do not store representations of external states of the world" (Hutto 2017, p.206). While Hutto, under REC's guise (2013, 2017, 2022), has criticised mental representational accounts for its characterisation of EM, I argue that his own contentless view does not offer any further resources for understanding EM.

Based on REC and Hutto's embodied and enactive view of memory, content and representations are not required for basic forms of cognition. They only enter the playing field when the correct scaffolding and narrative practices are achieved. However, if these 'narrative skills' or specific 'capacities' are not achieved under his view, then any form of episodic memory that is contentful but that does not meet these conditions would be impossible. In light of this, Hutto rightly acknowledges that "an enactive account of memory is still unable to tell the whole story of basic biological remembering" (Hutto 2018, p. 110). In particular, REC may "lack the resources needed for explaining the reconstructive imaginative acts that constitute experientially rich episodic forms of remembering." (Hutto and Peeters 2018, p. 110). While Hutto has attempted to remedy the situation, to explain a purely discursive account for 'pure episodic memory', there are still strong ties to SIT, which is problematic on its own[5]. For this reason, the view can be considered less desirable than the mental representational view that REC argues against, as there is nothing we can recognise as contentful episodic memory on this account. In this view, episodic memory has no content. If so, it is unclear whether Hutto's attempt at explicating SIT and Simulation Theories of memory can address the nature of the type of episodic remembering this thesis is interested in.

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[5] Challenges and problems presented to SIT are discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.

4. Micronarratives: A Proposal

There is one other viable option that a weak narrative view can offer. In Chapter 2, a challenge to Marya Schechtman (2007) and Shaun Gallagher's (2020) views was critically assessed in line with empirical evidence presented by Richard Heersmink (2022). Heersmink (2022) discusses the impact of Dementia and Alzheimer's on cognition and autobiographical memory. His overall view of memory can be seen as a weak view, but one that relies on an extended, embodied, and distributed approach to cognition without taking this form of memory to be contentless (Heersmink 2022, p. 1). Memory, in this view, is not unequivocally brain bound but embedded within the environment (Heersmink 2022, p. 8). Heersmink argues that extended and distributed cognition can play a constitutive role in our narrative identities (Heersmink 2022, p. 8). Our biological memory systems and external environments come together and are consolidated into 'distributed memory systems' (Heersmink 2022, p. 9). These 'distributed memory systems' also consider individuals may have autobiographical memories that are not cohesive, or linked (p. 8). He illustrates this claim with a story from a patient with Dementia, where said patient confabulates 'micro-narratives' (Heersmink 2022, p. 8). From this example, l propose a weaker narrativist account interconnected with embodied forms of remembering, the Micronarrative Account (MA). MA presents an account of EM that involves contentful representation but is still weak in that it does not require the unity, consistency, and capacities demanded by the stronger and moderate narrativist views of memory.

4.1 What is a Micronarrative?

Episodic memory can be viewed as multimodal, capturing both embodied forms of cognition and contentful representations that are narrative in kind. Micronarrative traits can be viewed as programmatic, whereby a micronarrative is a story of an episode of someone's life and is not necessarily connected to any other narratives - it holds the form of a story, but one that is not part of a larger 'life story'. While a micronarrative can be treated like a narrative, it is rather an encapsulated narrative that targets particular events or episodes, where the ability to have these memories lies in narrating certain micro-episodes. Moreover, in agreement with Gregory Currie, I argue that past experiences and events can be considered fragmented and comparable to smaller episodes that have been developed into stories about past events (Currie 2010, p. 13).

As noted in the stronger and moderate narratives views, there are individuals who can order a life story in line with an overextending global or temporal story, however, l have argued that

there are those who cannot. There are individuals who simply do not live their lives in a way that involves implicit full-fledged narratives (Strawson 2004). While I argue that episodic memories under my proposal is narrative in kind and involves meaningful contentful representations, l agree with Strawson that the increment of coherent narratives is not necessary for self-experience (Strawson 2004). Furthermore, I argue that episodic memory is possible for those who cannot have any proper form of autobiographical memory. That is, for those with mental disorders or psychopathologies such as Alzheimer's, Dementia, who cannot place themselves within a broader overarching autobiographical narrative. Most importantly, there are also non-pathological individuals that do not narrate overarching life stories.

A Micronarrative is not prone to updating and does not fall short to problems of inaccuracy and does not require sophisticated propositional beliefs. Since it is narrative in kind, micronarratives do not necessarily need to be truthful depictions, and they too, can be fictional stories. While these episodes are narrative in form, they still tend to deal with a form of episodic memory or episode, in this case, episodes that are encapsulated, isolated, and not part of the larger narrative that holds in autobiographical memory. Micronarratives do not require any form of coherence or sophisticated storytelling capacities since they are not part of a larger coherent structure or framework as the stronger and moderate narrativist accounts will have it.

4.2 Small Stories, Small Worlds: Micronarratives an Alternative Solution

Even the most influential proponents of stronger, moderate, and weak narrativist accounts have provided vital theories for how we understand remembering. The Micronarrative solution l put forward can be viewed as a weaker version of narrativist accounts. The reason for formulating this account stems from REC's various discussions of empirical evidence and theoretical challenges presented in Chapter 1 and 2. As such, the micronarrative view offers a better explanation for episodic remembering and does not fall short to the same challenges raised in Chapter 2 for the stronger, more moderate, and REC's non-content view presented by Hutto (2017, 2013). Stronger narrativist accounts emphasise the importance of 'narrative unity', 'coherence' and 'self-constitution' (Rudd 2012, 2007, Schectman 2011 and Nelson & Fivush 2011), however, these deep-rooted claims were demonstrated to be problematic. Those who do not weave stories about their lives or do not see themselves as objects over time cannot be viewed as persons (Strawson 2004). For the non-psychopathological and psychopathological cases, the inability to create overarching autobiographical narratives would leave no room for

understanding their personal episodic memories as their EMs would not meet the two main conditions of the stronger accounts, (1) coherence and (2) a whole life story.

For the more moderate narrativist accounts, Schechtman and Gallagher still emphasise the importance of temporality and the significance of continuity (Gallagher 2012; Schechtman 2014). While Schechtman softens her view, Gallagher offers an account that claims the need for four capacities to contribute to our narrative skills, and in turn, to create self-narratives (Gallagher, 2012). These four capacities: temporal ordering, minimal self-reference, episodic and autobiographical memory, and metacognition, are in his view, important for understanding experience and linking events together (Gallagher 2012). Yet Gallagher does not provide insights into how we can theoretically distinguish episodic from autobiographical memory. Lacking the means to distinguish them, it is difficult to articulate and explain episodic memory given what was argued in this thesis about the specificities of EM vis a vis AM more broadly.

Drawing from empirical evidence for the pathological cases (e.g., Dementia, Alzheimer's, PTSD, and depression), we can understand how these fit into the notion of misremembering. Many individuals may not participate in reflective activities or deliberate the meaning of past experiences. Moreover, they may not consider how they 'fit together', and in turn, not require any form of coherence prerequisites to understand themselves, their identity, personhood, or past episodes in their lives. If this is the case, then stronger and more moderate narrativist accounts seem to be unable to explain these crucial differences. While Schechtman and Gallagher present claims that are not characterised as 'strong' narrativism, they cannot provide an understanding for those suffering from psychopathologies and those who may not adhere to the specified constraints or capacities presented on both their accounts.

5. Challenges and Implications for the Micronarrative Account

The Coherence Challenge

One could argue that the micronarrative view may fall into the issue of requiring some form of coherence to be considered a proper narrative account. However, the Micronarrative Account (MA) draws from a weaker embodied narrative view. MA argues that content is still available for episodic memory because it is encapsulated and isolated. It is not part of the larger narrative as Schechtman and Gallagher will have it, and not non-narrative and contentless, as is the case for Hutto. While Hutto discusses autobiographical and episodic memory, he focuses on AM as

being narrative in kind and requiring some form of coherence. For Gallagher, prerequisites are necessary to understand the narratives we weave; temporality and the means for self-reflection are important facets. However, individuals with psychopathology may be unable to engage in self-reflection or for the non-pathological case; many individuals may not engage in any meaningful self-reflective practice concerning their past experiences or how it fits into a larger narrative.

Yet, one could still argue that individuals may lose all sense of self and can live meaningful lives without having some form of unity or consistent narrative. There may be fragmented episodes from an individual's life that continue to be narrated and relived that do not fit in an entire life story, and, consequently, can be isolated and separate from one's autobiographical memory. Much like in the case of Alzheimer's, Dementia, PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), Depression, or the non-pathological individual, as discussed in Chapter 2. For the non-pathological case, there are instances when we are fixated on certain events, we may have issues integrating them into a larger life narrative, and these events remain as episodes and do not require coherence and truth-abiding properties to be considered micronarratives. The Micronarrative Account (MA) offers a weak NA of EM that opens room for those who suffer from psychopathology and the large population of individuals who do not view their lives in accordance with an 'entire life story'.

The Episodic Self and Memory Challenge

As discussed in Chapter 2, Strawson (2004) argues that some individuals are 'deeply non-narrative' and do not live their lives in a way that involves narratives. Strawson refers to these individuals or 'personality types' as 'Episodic's'. Episodic's do not see themselves as selves persisting over time or engaging in narratives to live rich and fulfilling lives (Strawson 2004). He argues that many individuals do not partake in self-reflective activities and do not need to weave fully fledge autobiographical narratives to live lives that are ethical, meaningful, and tied to our identities (Strawson 2004). If this is the case, any form of narrative would appear redundant, as on Strawson's account, Episodic's memories are narrative in kind. Thus, Strawson's view might also be seen as a threat to the Micronarrative Account and deflate the importance of narrative in general.

Yet, there are some ways in which Strawson's view can be refuted. While Strawson argues against narrative accounts and forwards a view that is episodic and related to specific episodes in one's life, questions regarding their structure are important. The assumption that Strawson's

view would fall under that of a mental representational or content-based approach would be problematic, as the previous chapters of this thesis have suggested through the issues of misremembering that is supported by a range of empirical evidence. While Strawson does speak to this view, it would be the only other viable explanation to provide context to his episodic personality type. Yet, Strawson does submit to the fact that our memories can be 'garbled', and we do not remember the specifics of events in our lives (Strawson 2020, p. 11). That is, we could also assume that Strawson may agree with the Micronarrative account instead, where people view these episodes as micronarratives that do not require sophisticated propositions or accuracy conditions.

The Multiple Story Challenge

In Chapter 2, moderate narrativist accounts were discussed at length, and two challenges by Peter Lamarque regarding narrative structures were presented. Lamarque's arguments served to target the stronger and more moderate narrativist accounts, however, his objections raise important questions about the construal and structure of the micronarrative view. In particular, one of these challenges, the Multiple Story Challenge, poses a fundamental issue for the micronarrative account l propose. He argues that our stories often change and turn into different stories depending on the story's content, the person's overall aim of why they are telling the narrative (Lamarque 2004, p. 405). If we tell multiple stories, how can a micronarrative function as encapsulated, isolated, or 'stuck'? The account presented here is programmatic, and more can be said regarding this specific issue to make it fully grounded, however, this is beyond the scope of this current thesis. However, one might argue in defence of this view that, micronarratives might work in different ways in different cases. They can work automatically as isolated and encapsulated episodes. These micronarratives may involve multiple loops of stories that have become stuck or are repeated often, yet they can also be re-narrated multiple times in different ways. Prime examples of these forms of scenarios have been tied to empirical evidence and those suffering from Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia, PTSD and Depression. However, even for the non-pathological case, there are various times in which the same memory might be narrated multiple times in different ways. This may also occur because these topics for the ordinary person may not be significant but still be prompted when discussing certain topics with others.

On the one hand, Larmarque's challenge brings to the surface potential notes for further research and space to discover how micronarratives can be further understood when discussing

the intuitions that underlie multiple storytelling faculties for individuals. Nevertheless, I argue that my response still offers an explanation for how MA can make room for the occurrence of multiple stories that can sometimes, under certain conditions, become stuck and encapsulated. Moreover, this challenge could help strengthen the micronarrative view suggesting how erroneous thinking can be helpful in further developing the MA view.

6. Further Research and Motivations for the Micronarrative Account

This thesis has shone a light on various areas of memory and the various memory-centric theories that have been contended to provide the best explanation for how we understand its function. MA can be used as a framework for future research and can be viewed as an attractive account that has set a foundation for understanding episodic memory. Other disciplines and further developments of the account can be generated to further understand psychopathology and how it affects memory. In this case, while the thesis suggested that conditions such as Alzheimer's, Dementia, PTSD, and depression might be better understood along the MA view, not only that would require further development, but also other pathological conditions can be considered, for example, bipolar disorder, brain infections, alcohol and drug use, Multiple Sclerosis, etc.

Increasing our understanding of the narrative accounts of memory can allow us to advance the current field of the philosophy of memory. For example, one area for further development concerns the possibility of applying micronarrative research to assist in understanding embodied and distributed forms of memory to understand how our memories, or micronarratives, may be connected, prompted, or triggered by specific objects. Research by Richard Heersmink (2018) has demonstrated that autobiographical memory may also be "anchored in our embodied interactions with an ecology of artefacts in our environment. Lifelogs, photos, videos, journals, diaries, souvenirs, jewellery, books, works of art, and many other meaningful objects trigger and sometimes constitute emotionally laden autobiographical memories." (Heersmink 2017, p. 182). While there is still a great deal of work that needs to be done to develop MA by drawing from current research along a distributive and extended account, there may be potential in it for understanding how our understanding of episodes in the past is provoked by objects in our environment that hold symbolic information regarding some of its features.

Lastly, further research conducted by Venditti, Piredda and Mattana (2017) on the role of narratives has been considered under a more contemporary view. The authors argue that how individuals communicate online involves 'remediation' and 'narrativity' (p. 279). Venditti et al. contend that how we communicate online via various social media platforms, e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Blogs etc, suggests that the stories shared can be nonlinear and multimodal (Venditti et al. 2017). Moreover, they argue that the narratives presented on social media platforms are similarly fragmented and can be understood as "compositions of different microcontent pieces" (Venditti et al. 2017, p. 275). Furthermore, the view utilises two case studies to argue that the narratives presented on various online social media sites should not be viewed as whole life stories. More specifically, the fragmented narratives they refer to can be, to quote:

> "Defined as micronarratives such as representations which (1) possess some of the conditions of narrativity, (2) are composed of autonomous multimodal fragments, spread across the digital narrative space, and (3) require the user's cognitive action of interpretation in order to be connected to other fragments." (Venditti et al. 2017, p. 279).

Interestingly, this work helps support the proposal this thesis has put forward and suggests that the fragmented view of narratives I have presented can be found in contemporary research focusing on communication in online environments (Vindetti et al. 2017). The Micronarrative Account, in essence, can be viewed as a fruitful view of how we understand ourselves, others, and the world around us in varied ways in the complex world of social media.

7. Conclusion

This chapter critically assessed various weaker narrativist accounts in an attempt to provide a framework and solution for understanding episodic memory. Taking on board REC's framework, this chapter assessed Hutto's (2017) SIT and ST formulation, only to find that it is unable to account for isolated episodes. It was shown that Hutto's account lacks the tools needed to characterise non-contentful episodic remembering. After reviewing these limitations, a proposal was suggested in the form of a Micronarrative Account (MA). The Micronarrative view was discussed and established as a weaker narrativist account interlinked with an embodied view of memory. Similarly, the same challenges presented to stronger and moderate NAs were presented to MA in this chapter (The Coherence Challenge, The Episodic Self and

Memory Challenge (2004), and the Multiple Story Challenge (Lamarque 2004)). Next, answers to these challenges were proposed, suggesting that a Micronarrative Account (MA) is a strong contender to account for EM. Lastly, the chapter suggested further research and potential avenues for articulating and developing MA.

Conclusion

The thesis introduced the current philosophical landscape of EM and explored its defining characteristics. Radical Enactive Cognition (REC) was presented as the primary rationale for the thesis. In line with REC's groundwork, various challenges, including the Hard Problem of Content (HPC) and empirical evidence associated with characterisations of episodic memory relative to mental representations – namely concerns regarding misinformation and accuracy were presented. The thesis drew from REC's established narrativist framework as a potential alternative. To do this, it presented the current narrativist literature, taking stock of strong, moderate, and weaker narrativist accounts. The thesis argued that stronger and moderate narrativist formulations could not counter numerous challenges that were presented in the form of the Personal Identity and Episodic Self Challenge (Strawson 2004, 2020), the Multiple Story and Fragmented Character of Narratives Challenge (Lamarque 2004), and the Constraints and Capacities Challenge (Heersmink 2022).

In this vein, it considered empirical evidence from psychopathological conditions such as Dementia, Alzheimer's, PTSD and Depression. Moreover, non-pathological cases were discussed, posing further theoretical challenges for stronger and moderate narrativist accounts. The challenges presented raised significant objections and called to attention the need for further investigation into possible alternatives that could make room for accounting for our memories of isolated experiences in the past. In line with this, the thesis in its third chapter addressed the issues regarding the characterisation of episodic memory (EM) and demonstrated that a weak narrativist framework could provide the necessary components for understanding our memories of isolated experiences or events in the past. It argued that episodic memory under a narrative construal is better understood in terms of the construal of isolated and short narratives that are not part of a larger narrative, that is, 'micronarratives'.

In particular, the thesis attempted to supplement a moderate narrativist and embodied approach to episodic memory; however, it was clear that it faced the same challenges as the strong and moderate narrativist approaches. Alternatively, a weaker narrativist account was shown not to fall short to the same problems that affect other narrative accounts. In effect, the Micronarrative Account (MA) was not troubled by any of the above challenges and objections. As such, MA was argued to successfully provide an account for explaining and characterising our memories of episodes in one's personal past in a narrativist light. To conclude, the thesis highlighted

similar research that has been conducted and its theoretical and philosophical importance for other areas, including research and communication in social media.

In sum, the thesis argued that the Micronarrative Account (MA), though only developed in this Honours thesis in broad strokes, has the potential for furthering research on episodic memory, psychopathology affecting memory, and the overall role of narrative in memory.

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