

The Phenomenology of Episodic Recall

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The concept of episodic memory has been highly influential in shaping psychological research over almost three decades now. It was first introduced into the psychological literature by Endel Tulving (1972). Yet Tulving was not the first to use the term 'episodic memory'. It had been used before in a book on the philosophy of memory by Stanley Munsat (1966). Given that Tulving acknowledges Munsat as his source of inspiration, one should expect that the two authors use the term in the same sense. Looking back over the two texts, however, it soon becomes clear that Munsat and Tulving are using the term 'episodic memory' to mark out two potentially quite different phenomena.

Tulving uses the term 'episodic memory' in order to characterize that faculty which allows us to receive and store 'information about temporally dated episodes or events, and temporal-spatial relations among these events' (Tulving, 1972: 385)—occurrences that have been experienced by the subject in the past. Roughly speaking, it is because the subject can report an episode that once happened to her that Tulving chooses the term 'episodic'. For Munsat, by contrast, memory is 'episodic' when the subject can report an episode that happens to her now. It is the kind of memory that our attention is drawn to, for instance, when something suddenly comes back to us. In Munsat's (1966: 47) words '[w]hen I say "I just remembered . . ." I am giving voice to something which just happened'—a conscious mental occurrence that takes place at the time of remembering.

My aim in this chapter is to explore in more detail whether there is a connection between a memory's being 'episodic' in Tulving's sense and a memory's being 'episodic' in Munsat's sense. More to the point, I wish to look at the question as to whether the particular kind of memory Tulving has in mind when he speaks of a faculty which allows us to remember specific past events can be defined in terms of the particular phenomenology involved in recalling those events.

I

At the heart of Tulving's work on memory is the attempt to make good some intuitive differences we see between different kinds of memory. In particular, we find it natural to distinguish cases which we would typically describe by saying that someone remembers a particular event from cases which we would typically

describe by saying simply that someone remembers that something is the case. It is this intuition, that memory-ascriptions of the first kind answer to the presence of a distinctive kind of psychological state, which Tulving tries to sharpen up by introducing the term 'episodic memory'. Describing his own motives for introducing episodic memory as a separate psychological category, Tulving speaks of two 'discoveries' which he made thinking about standard procedures for assessing memory performance.¹

His first discovery concerns something which 'many wise philosophers from Heraclitus on had known all the time: events do not repeat themselves, there is never another event exactly like a given one' (Tulving 1983: 19). The idea here is this. Over time, I may have learned, say, that the bus to the university stops a little bit further down the road from my house. I may have come by this knowledge in a variety of ways: walking past the bus stop and reading the sign, looking out the window and seeing people getting on and off the bus there, or asking one of the neighbours. But saying that I remember that the bus stops there is quite different from saying that I remember it stopping there. In the latter case there has to be a particular episode or episodes—individual, unique occasions when the bus stopped there—that I have in mind. By contrast, if all I remember is that it stops there, I know of something that happens there repeatedly, but my memory is not in any sense about any particular instances of it happening rather than others.

Tulving's second discovery concerns 'the relation between the learner's response and the internal cognitive state that it represented: identical responses could reflect different kinds of awareness' (1983: 20). What Tulving has in mind here is something like the following. Think of someone who asks me, 'Where does the bus to the university stop?' I may point in a certain direction simply because I remember that this is where the bus stops. No particular occasion when the bus has stopped there in the past may come to mind. Now think of someone who asks me, 'Where did the man in the blue coat get off the bus?' I may point to the same place, but this time because I remember the bus stopping there and a man in a blue coat getting off. The response to a question about a particular incident, the thought is, may be identical to the response to a question as to how things usually go. Yet, in so far as it reflects an episodic memory, it reflects a specific kind of awareness which goes beyond the awareness involved in remembering that something is the case.

¹ The points Tulving makes in the passages cited are somewhat obscured by the fact that he uses examples from word-list or word-association learning tasks to illustrate them. A central distinction he draws, for instance, is that between remembering the meaning of a word and remembering the token occurrence of that word on a list that one has studied before. However, it strikes me that 'word-events' (i.e. presentations of individual word-tokens) do not provide a good paradigm for remembered episodes. In particular, it is not clear whether one should say that a subject has an episodic memory of a word-event if she is able to say, for instance, which of the lists she has been asked to study before a word appeared on. To be sure, episodic memory does have a role to play in explaining the subject's performance. Without any memory of having studied word-lists before she will not be able to understand the instructions given to her. But it may well be that the information acquired while studying the word-lists was non-episodic, i.e. was simply how each list goes. Therefore, to say that the subject has episodic memories for each particular word seems implausible.

There is a problem, though, with Tulving's two 'discoveries', as they stand, if they are indeed supposed to explain the distinction we see between remembering particular events and remembering that something is the case.² The problem arises because, arguably, what is the case can include such things as that a particular event happened on a certain date. Thus, for example, it is true of a large number of people born after 20 July 1969 that they remember that Neil Armstrong first set foot on the moon on that day, but of none of them is it also true that they remember Neil Armstrong first setting foot on the moon on that day. Now take, for instance, the idea that episodic memory concerns particular, unique events. On the face of it, a grasp of the fact that events do not repeat themselves also seems to be presupposed when we say of a person that he remembers that something happened on a particular date, or that someone was the first to do something, even if the person does not remember the event itself. Similar problems arise with the idea that identical responses can reflect different kinds of awareness, depending on whether the subject merely remembers that something is the case or whether he remembers a particular past event. The problem here is that it rather trivializes matters to say that 'identical responses' can reflect different kinds of awareness if they are responses to different questions, as in the examples given in the previous paragraph. To be sure, a response to a question about a particular event may reflect a different cognitive state than that reflected in a response to a question which does not make reference to a particular event. But this may just be because the two questions deal with a different subject matter. Yet, even if we ask a person questions about a particular event, she need not always remember that event itself to answer them. And it is at least not obvious how the envisaged distinction between two different kinds of awareness can help us deal with such a case.

II

The problem I have just sketched is that there seems to be more to claiming that one remembers a particular event than saying that one could cash out that claim by, say, recounting what happened then. Consider the following example (adapted from Ayer, 1956, and Evans, 1982): asked whether one can remember a particular incident in one's childhood, one may find oneself in no doubt that it happened. One may even be able to visualize it. Yet one may still be quite unsure as to whether one can genuinely remember the event itself. However, as Ayer points out, 'it may also be that all of a sudden the event comes back quite clearly. One has no doubt that one remembers it' (Ayer, 1956: 146).

Now, there is one feature of episodic memory we have not considered so far, which Tulving sometimes puts by saying that episodic memory is essentially memory for 'personally experienced' events, or events that belong to our

² Tulving himself is, of course, aware of these problems; cf. Tulving, 1983: ch. 3.

'personal past' (see Tulving, 1983: 39). Take again the case of a person who remembers that Neil Armstrong first set foot on the moon on 20 July 1969, but does not remember Neil Armstrong first setting foot on the moon on that day, simply because she was not yet born then. Even though she may know a lot about the event, no episodic memories of the event could ever come back to her in a flash of recollection of the kind just described, as they might do for someone who lived through the days of the first moon landing. Part of what underlies the distinction we draw between saying that a person remembers that something is the case and saying that a person remembers a particular event is the thought that memory ascriptions of the second type carry with them a specific assumption about that person's history: namely that she has witnessed the event in question. By contrast, no such specific assumption is involved in saying that someone remembers that something is the case. Memories of this type can have been acquired in a variety of ways. Especially, it does not matter whether they have been acquired through one's own experience or through the testimony of others.

What I wish to suggest is that if episodic memory is to be a distinct psychological category, and if part of what makes it the case that someone can episodically remember an event is that she witnessed the event in question, the fact that she did witness that event must help us make sense of why episodic memory is a faculty for which Tulving's two 'discoveries' hold as a matter of necessity. To repeat, Tulving claims that episodic remembering is crucially a matter of having in mind a particular, unique occurrence. And, according to him, having in mind such a particular, unique occurrence involves a distinct kind of awareness, different from that involved in merely retrieving knowledge as to what is the case. My suggestion is that we must appeal to the fact that episodic memory is essentially memory for events which the subject witnessed herself to explain what these two claims come to.

With episodic remembering, what makes it the case that the subject has this particular event in mind rather than any other is not the fact that she can provide the date when it happened or give any other description which would single it out from others like it. Indeed, if someone episodically remembers an event, questions such as 'When do you remember it happening?' or 'Which particular occasion do you have in mind?' still make sense for her even if she cannot provide an informative answer. It is transparent to her that there is an answer, that there is a particular event she remembers, and we need to turn to the fact that it is the event she witnessed to explain why this is so.

Clearly, however, saying that it is transparent to the remembering subject that she has a particular event in mind also means more than saying that her memory happens to stem from her having experienced one event rather than another. The real force behind saying that there is a different kind of awareness to consider here, as Tulving claims, must lie in the fact that the subject's having witnessed the event in question makes available to her a way of thinking about the event that would not be available to her had she not witnessed it. For this to be the case,

however, her having witnessed the event in question must make a difference to what it is like for her now to remember it.

In what follows, I wish to flesh out these suggestions by looking more closely at the idea that episodic memory makes available a particular way of thinking about events. In particular, I wish to pursue the claim that this idea can illuminate both questions as to the content of episodic memories and questions as to the phenomenology of episodic recall. First, however, I wish to look in more detail at the kind of remembering that is at issue when we say that someone remembers that something is the case, and the way of thinking about the world it involves.

III

Developmental psychologists have pointed out that young children seem to be outstandingly effective at learning and remembering event sequences. For instance, there exists a large body of research (starting with Nelson and Gruendel, 1981) on children's competence in verbally recalling the course of events involved in certain commonplace activities, such as the sequence of events involved in having a meal at a restaurant, or in assembling a toy from various components. These cases are often referred to by saying that the child has acquired a *script* of a certain type of event sequence, and we find that children are capable of recounting such scripts after just one encounter with the kind of sequence in question (Ratner, Smith and Dion, 1986). Yet it is doubtful whether we can also say that these children have episodic memories. Even at a stage when children have become quite articulate in reporting sequences of events in the form of a script, it often seems exceedingly difficult to get them to generate reports of specific occasions when such a sequence took place.

It is arguable, however, that the emergence of scripts indicates the development of a particular form of declarative memory. It is the term 'declarative memory' which is typically used to capture that form of memory which we have so far described by saying that it involves remembering that something is the case. And, as I wish to argue, it is declarative memory which can, in a certain sense, count as the most basic form of retention of knowledge about the world.

The ability to learn from the word of others, or to put what one has learned into words oneself, is often seen as a hallmark for the possession of declarative memory. We can look at this ability to make clearer what is involved in declarative memory, and how it differs from more primitive learning capacities. Think, for instance, about knowing one's way about in a building. If we know the route from, say, the entrance to a particular office, we can usually also give someone else directions. And if we don't know the route, we can acquire that knowledge by asking someone else for directions and use it to get to where we want to go. But there is a more primitive way in which one may be said to have learned a route. An animal may have learned, through trial and error, how to negotiate a maze to get to a food source, without there being any sense in which it could

manifest possession of that information other than through that practical ability, or any sense in which it could have acquired that information other than through repeated practice. The point here, of course, is not just that the animal has no capacity for verbal report or verbal comprehension. Rather, the point is that there are two quite different abilities for retaining information at issue.³

The claim, in short, is that the information retained in declarative memory is *accessible* to the subject in a way in which this is not the case for the information retained in what is usually called 'procedural memory', for the latter is contained in a specific practical ability. There are two important, interconnected, aspects to this notion of 'accessibility'. First, it involves the idea that information is available to the person in such a manner that it can be drawn upon by him in a variety of ways. What he has learned is not just how to do one thing or another, but how things stand, such that they call, say, for choosing certain words to give directions or certain movements to get to his destination. Secondly, it involves the idea that information is available to the person in such a way that it can be brought to mind. In talking about declarative memory, we can draw a distinction between a person's retrieving the information and his acting upon it, in a way we cannot do when we are talking about procedural memory. It is because the person's memory presents things as being thus and so to him that he knows, for instance, which words to choose to give directions or which movements to get to his destination.

Considerations such as these, I believe, are at the heart of the idea that declarative memory involves the retention of knowledge in a way in which procedural memory does not.⁴ Ascriptions of declarative memory carry the implication that the subject is able to see what he is onto in doing certain things. In explaining a person's behaviour, to say that he knows that things are a certain way (or that they go a certain way, as in the case of children who have acquired a script) means more than that he can do certain things. It implies that there is a sense in which he knows why it is right for him to do those things, why doing them is the right thing to do. Talk about declarative remembering as a matter of retaining knowledge, thus, has its roots in a picture of declarative remembering as a way of making sense of why it is right for us to do certain things by bringing to mind how things stand.

³ Indeed, it may be argued that the kind of memory we rely on when we make our way into our own office in the morning is of the same kind as the animal's, only that we also have the more sophisticated form of memory available. Conversely, I do not wish to imply that having a language is necessary for possession of declarative memories.

⁴ Possession of practical skills is sometimes described as a matter of 'knowing how' instead of 'knowing that' (cf. Cohen, 1984; Squire, 1987). This distinction was originally introduced by Ryle (1949: ch. 2), who argued that the ascription of propositional knowledge had to go together with the ascription of a range of practical skills. It is less clear, however, whether Ryle himself would be prepared to describe the possession of practical skills alone as a kind of knowledge. Cf. Moore, 1997: ch. 8, on related issues.

IV

Human reminiscing about times gone by often seems an idle pursuit, and distracting from the task at hand. What, then, is the point of being able to remember particular past events? What I wish to argue, in short, is that our possession of episodic memories has a particular epistemic role to play in our knowledge about the empirical world. And it is in this light that questions about the content and phenomenology of episodic memories have to be addressed.

Let us again return to the example of children's use of scripts. I have said that the emergence of scripts can be seen as a manifestation of a particular form of declarative memory. This is not just plausible in view of the fact that the children can put what they have learned into words. Much research on scripts is also concerned with children's ability to replicate event sequences in action (see e.g. Bauer and Mandler, 1989). And what this research brings out is that they show a remarkable flexibility in recognizing different situations as falling under the same script, or in integrating new facts with what they have learned. Script formation appears to involve a certain ability to generalize from past experience. Yet, if it is true that children can acquire scripts without having the capacity to form episodic memories (see McCormack and Hoerl, 1999, for a more detailed defence of such a claim), we have to ask what kinds of limitation this nevertheless imposes on those children's reasoning capacities.

The issue we need to focus on, I believe, is to what extent scripts can count as generalizations from past experience. A child who has acquired a script can be said to know how certain things go, on the basis of certain past experiences she has had. Yet, what I wish to argue is that there are two quite different ways of spelling out what it might mean to say that a subject possesses such knowledge. And the difference lies with the question as to whether the subject herself can make reference to the particular past events she has experienced in justifying the beliefs she holds. Adopting a phrase coined by Bill Brewer (1996), I will argue that if children lack episodic memories, there is an important sense in which they miss out on 'how they are right' about how things go.

Robyn Fivush (1997) has usefully pointed out two core features of scripts. They are marked by the linguistic form script reports tend to take: scripts are often told in the timeless present tense and using the second person. What appears to be reported is not the occurrence of a particular event as distinguished from occurrences of events of the same type at other times, but rather 'what happens each and every time the event occurs' (1997: 142). And, in so far as script reports involve the appeal to an agent, they report not what the speaker did, but 'what you do' in the sense of 'what one does' (ibid.) in a certain type of situation. It is plausible to think that the co-occurrence of these two features is not just incidental. The idea here is this: the reason why scripts cannot be counted as records of token events as they happened to a particular person at a particular time is that events only figure in them in so far as there is an appropriate sequence for them to occur in. That is to say, scripts are concerned with constraints on what can count as the

right kind of sequence in which events must be produced or be recounted. What they record, then, are the types which events must belong to in order to make up a sequence of that kind, rather than token occurrences of particular such events.

I think what these considerations show is that we have to be careful in describing what is entailed by declarative memory. I have argued that what is crucial about having declarative memories is that these memories enable the subject to see what she is onto in doing certain things, that is, why it is right to say one thing rather than another or do one thing rather than another. For instance, a child who can recount what is involved in having a meal at a restaurant can be said to have picked up on the conventional order in which things happen when one visits a restaurant. Or a child who can assemble a toy might be said to have picked up on the causal order in which one must put the pieces together to produce the toy. Yet at this point we must observe an important distinction. We must distinguish between seeing why it is right for me to do what I do, given the way I take things to be, and seeing why it is right for me to take things to be that way in the first place. In ascribing declarative memories to someone, we commit ourselves to saying that she has a grasp of certain constraints on what she says or does, but we do not as yet say what her grasp of these constraints comes to, what constitutes her grasp of the reality her beliefs are answerable to.

A comparison might perhaps clarify the point I am trying to get at. Consider, for instance, two different senses in which we can talk about someone knowing about the colour of things. In the case of a sighted person, an account of what it is for her to know about the colour of things will usually make reference to her ability to make out these colours by looking. Her grasp of the kind of circumstance that makes it rational to have certain beliefs about the colour of things is in part explained by her ability to enjoy certain experiences which present things as having these colours. The same cannot be said of a congenitally blind person. In as far as such a person can be said to know about the colours of things in the world, it is only because of what she has been told about the colours of certain objects and her ability to make certain inferences. Clearly, there is a difference between these two cases—a difference that needs to be spelled out in terms of what each of the two persons' knowledge about colours consists in. The blind person will have learned, for instance, that it is correct to say that grass is green or that the sky is blue when there are no clouds. Yet, her conception of the reality her beliefs about colour are answerable to differs from that possessed by a person whose knowledge can draw on her own visual experiences.

The point I wish to make can now be put as follows. When considering what it means to say of a child that she knows about, say, what happens at a restaurant, or what it takes to assemble a toy, we similarly have to ask what that knowledge consists in. To say that a child has a restaurant-script, for instance, might imply that she grasps that the dessert comes after the main course. Yet the child's knowledge about such event sequences may be more like a blind person's knowledge about colours, in so far as she cannot turn her mind to particular occurrences she has experienced. There is a sense in which the child's knowledge about event

sequences cannot draw on particular experiences she has had, just like the blind person's knowledge about colours cannot draw upon visual experiences. To be sure, there is a difference here in so far as the child's problems lie with memory, rather than with experience itself. But this should not distract us from a very important respect in which the analogy still holds. If the child does indeed lack episodic memories, she cannot make use of the particular experiences she has had in grasping the kind of circumstances that make it rational to have the beliefs she holds, in the same way as adults can. While there is a sense in which she can generalize from past experience by forming a script, her memory abilities may still be limited in that they do not make available to her a way of thinking of specific occurrences she has witnessed which she could use in justifying the generalizations she comes up with.

The thought here is that episodic memory has a specific role to play in the kinds of knowledge about events and event sequences a person can be said to possess. In particular, a person's ability to remember particular past events can explain a sense in which she can grasp why it is right for her to hold certain generalized beliefs. A person who remembers how things went on previous occasions knows not just that there are instances of which certain generalizations are true. Her episodic memory will also provide her with a grasp of how she is right about those instances, that is, how she is in a position to know about them. There is a specific way of justifying the beliefs she holds which episodic memory makes available to her.

Clearly, this is not to say that we can only really be said to know what happens when one visits a restaurant, or what it takes to put together a certain toy, if we can cite or think of particular occasions when we experienced these things ourselves. Rather, the suggestion is that using a justification of this kind displays a particular grasp of the reality our beliefs are answerable to—a grasp, for instance, of a world in which very much the same thing can happen, or the same states of affairs can obtain, on different occasions. In other words, if a subject is able to turn her mind, in episodic memory, to particular past occurrences, her ability to do so will provide her with a particular grasp of the circumstances that make it rational to hold certain beliefs. In reminding herself of how things went on particular occasions in the past, the subject is aware of having a specific kind of information germane to the truth of or falsity of her beliefs as to how these kinds of things go. Thus, the appeal to episodic memory here serves to elucidate not just how the subject has come to know that certain things are the case, but also what that knowledge consists in, that is, what constitutes it as a piece of knowledge about the empirical world.

I think considerations such as the ones just put forward can help us explain what it means to say that episodic memory involves a different form of conscious awareness from that involved in mere declarative memory. If we see a difference between the two cases, it is because we think of episodic memory as a faculty which makes manifest to us instances of the kinds of event or state of affairs our beliefs are about. I believe that this is part of the force behind saying that, in order

for someone to remember an event episodically, it must not just be the case that she experienced the event in question, but that her having done so must make a difference to the way she remembers it. There must be a connection between the specific epistemological status of episodic memory, as a particular way of retaining knowledge of events we have experienced in the past, and its phenomenology. However, this also means that any account of the phenomenology of episodic memory ought to make sense of the specific epistemological role I have sketched, and this is where I believe certain current conceptions of episodic memory fail.

V

One way of spelling out the phenomenology of episodic remembering is suggested by attributional theories of memory. The central contention of this group of theories is that 'people do not typically directly retrieve an abstract tag or label that specifies a memory's source, rather, activated memory records are evaluated and attributed to particular sources through decision processes performed during remembering' (Johnson, Hashtroudi, and Lindsay, 1993: 3). We can distinguish two kinds of such processes. There is, first, a rapid heuristic process of identifying the source of a memory on the basis of specific kinds of information which become available at the retrieval of records laid down in memory. Then there is a second, more systematic decision-making process by which we evaluate the outcome of the first. A memory attribution will only be upheld by the subject if it accords with what is otherwise known, that is, if it is supported by other memories, general knowledge, and our own assumptions about the functioning and strength of our memory.

According to one version of the attributional paradigm, episodic records inherit certain qualitative characteristics from the subject's initial encounter with the event he remembers. On this view, the sense in which episodic memory presents us with a piece of reality we experienced can be explained in terms of particular kinds of corollary information that were encoded when we experienced the event. Basically, the idea is that episodic remembering can be distinguished from other cognitive operations because it typically involves the retrieval of more sensory details, contextual information, or information about the modality through which the event was perceived. And it is these features that allow us to attribute our memory to a particular source.

Another variant of the attributional paradigm appeals not to qualitative characteristics of activated records themselves but to qualitative characteristics of their activation. Thus, according to this view, what guides the attribution is not something that has been encoded in the past, but the influence past experience has on present cognitive performance through transfer effects. For instance, it has been suggested that when we remember something we have previously experienced, it is the particular fluency with which details can be generated that leads us to make a memory attribution. The claim is that people learn to interpret such

differences in fluency 'as a sign that they are using the past' (Jacoby, Kelley, and Dywan, 1989: 396).

What, though, does all of this mean when it comes to questions about the phenomenology of episodic remembering? The idea, in short, is that qualitative features of activated records or qualitative features of their activation can explain why it strikes us that we must have experienced the event in question, which in turn leads us to endorse such a source attribution unless there are other reasons counting against it. What I wish to show, however, is that there are at least two different ways of interpreting this idea. And, ultimately, neither of them provides us with a satisfactory account of the phenomenology of episodic remembering and its role in our knowledge of the world.

The attributional account derives part of its strength from the fact that there are various ways in which the effects of past experience on present performance can be measured. Indeed, they can be measured in tasks which do not involve the participant making judgements about the past at all, but rather judgements about perceptual or aesthetic features of currently presented stimuli, or judgements about one's own current mental state (cf. Mayes, Ch. 7, this volume). This may invite us to think that, when subjects are asked to make judgements about the past, they put themselves into the position of the experimenter attributing the measured effects to past experience (cf. Jacoby, Kelley, and Dywan, 1989: 397), only with the difference that the subject is immediately conscious of these effects in a way the experimenter is not. Yet there is an obvious problem with this suggestion. Suppose there were some way the subject could come by the knowledge, say, that particular mental occurrences are typically caused by past experience (which is not at all a trivial assumption). The subject could then infer that it is bound to be true that he has had certain experiences in the past. Yet, to come back to our discussion in the last section, this falls short of showing how the subject could know how it is right for him to draw such an inference, that is, what more there is to judgements about the past to answer to than the occurrence, now, of particular mental phenomena. Arguably, the experimenter can only arrive at that particular attribution because he already knows that the participant has had certain experiences before. Thus, knowing what is involved in making the right kind of attribution itself seems to depend on knowing what has gone on before (or at least knowing of other cases in which what went on before had such an effect), rather than vice versa.

However, attributional theorists need not think of the subject as making a conscious inference from phenomenal features of certain mental occurrences to the occurrence of certain experiences in the past. On an alternative reading, attributional theories detail the workings of inference-like, but essentially non-deliberative, processes. Thus, for instance, attributional theories also make much of the fact that people can be manipulated into making erroneous memory judgements. The idea, on this reading, would again be that such errors are to do with features such as the amount of perceptual details generated, or the fluency with which they are generated, in response to certain tasks. Yet these features are

exploited by information processes which operate outside the subject's awareness, which can make it seem to us as though certain events have happened even though they never did. However, to think of such processes as essentially working outside conscious awareness also removes any justification for thinking of the features they exploit as elements of the phenomenology of episodic remembering. All the attributional theory gives us, on this construal, is an account of the mechanisms that give rise to situations in which it seems to us as though certain events have happened. Arguably, though, there is a difference between explaining why things seem a certain way to us, in this sense, and explaining what it is for them to seem that way to us. Attributional theories, on this reading, give a causal account of what must be the case for us to have certain experiences when we remember, but, if anything, they simply take for granted that we already know what it is for us to have such experiences, that is, what the phenomenology of episodic memory consists in.

VI

A very different approach to the phenomenology of episodic recall can be found in metarepresentational theories of episodic memory. Those theories take as their starting point William James's (1890: i. 648) description of 'memory proper' as 'the knowledge of an event, or fact, of which in the meantime we have not been thinking, with the additional consciousness that we have thought or experienced it before.' This 'additional consciousness', it is argued, requires the ability to represent one's own mental states and thus the possession of mental concepts. Furthermore, it is precisely the way one's own mental states are represented in episodic memory which 'confers the special phenomenal flavor to the remembering of past events' (Perner and Ruffman, 1995: 517). The basic idea here can be made clear by looking at an example Perner (2000) gives of the kind of representation involved in episodic memory (see also Dokic, Ch. 8, this volume):

I have information (that 'pear' was on the list and that I have *this information* because I have seen 'pear' on the list).

The force of the argument that, in order to have episodic memories, one must have mental concepts, is taken to arise from the claim that a remembered event 'must be remembered *as* personally experienced' (Perner, 2000). Thus episodic memory involves metarepresentational abilities, in the first place, because one must be able to conceptualize the mental state one was in when the remembered event happened (here, the seeing of the word 'pear'). Once this thought is in place, however, we must acknowledge that episodic memory also involves metarepresentational abilities in a second sense. It is not enough that I have the information that I experienced the event. I must grasp that I have this information because I experienced the event, rather than, for instance, because someone simply told me I was there. Thus episodic memory must also be metarepresentational in the sense that I must

be able to conceptualize my present mental state (the bearer of the information in question, as highlighted in the quotation above), namely as a state which has been caused by my past experience.

If this is true, it gives us a way of understanding the phenomenology of episodic recall which is quite different from that provided by attributional theories. Here, the sense in which episodic memory involves conscious awareness must be spelled out in terms of the particular representational structure of my current mental state. Arguably, if it is part of my being in a certain mental state that I have the information that that very mental state has been caused by my past experience, I must be aware of being in that mental state. In other words, saying that my present mental state provides me with the information that its own presence and nature are due to my own past experience just is a way of spelling out a sense in which that state can be said to be conscious. We only need to spell out the particular self-reflexive structure of that mental state to see what puts me into a position to be aware of being in it. Episodic memory cannot fail to involve a conscious occurrence in the present, because it partly consists in the awareness I have of my present mental state as a particular sort of mental state.

On closer inspection, however, there is a problem with the metarepresentational theory when it comes to the question as to how the past experience is supposed to figure in the subject's reasoning. Clearly, there is a sense in which I know which event it is I episodically remember only because I have experienced it. But if I already have to remember a particular past experience before I make the judgement that it was the cause of my present mental state, there must be a more primitive form of remembering things that happened in the past than that suggested by the metarepresentational theory. We could then ask why this form of remembering should be thought of as falling short of episodic memory, and what is so special about past experiences, rather than past events, that we can remember them in this way.

The rejoinder on the part of the metarepresentational theorist, at this stage, would presumably be that there is no special faculty for remembering past experiences assumed in the theory. All the theory presupposes is the information that I have had a certain experience, and that this experience is the cause of my present mental state. That I have had a certain experience, however, is a piece of information that might simply be retained in declarative memory. It is the kind of information I could have come by in a variety of ways; for instance, someone else might have told me where I had been and what had happened to me on a certain occasion.

If this is true, however, it leaves us with the problem as to what it means to say that, in episodic memory, I also have the information that my current mental state was caused by my past experience of the remembered event. Arguably, all the metarepresentational theorist can point to at this stage is the particular propositional content of the subject's current mental state, and the fact that, if the subject is in such a state, her being in that state is usually caused by her having had certain experiences. Yet, this seems to leave out the crucial sense in which

episodic memory provides the subject with a grasp of the reality her beliefs are answerable to. On the metarepresentational theorist's view, it would seem, the subject simply finds herself in a certain mental state. And the presence of that mental state, because of the particular kind of state it is, is supposed to alert the subject to the fact that this very mental state was caused by a certain past experience she has had. Yet, if all the subject can turn her mind to is that particular mental state, it is unclear how the world beyond the mental state she is in could enter into her reasoning in such a way that she might see how she is right about the fact that that mental state has a particular causal origin. If this is true, however, it is not clear what her grasp of that fact comes to in the first place.

Again, the problem here is not so much that there is no role to be played, within a theoretical account of episodic memory, by the kind of representational and conceptual abilities described by the metarepresentational account. It could well be that episodic memory requires some kind of ability for thinking about one's own past and present mental states to be in place, similar to that described by the metarepresentational account. But that does not mean that these representational and conceptual abilities can explain what it is to have an episodic memory, or can account for the role episodic memory plays in our knowledge about the world.

VII

In the remainder of this chapter, I shall outline an approach to the phenomenology of episodic recall which I hope can avoid some of the problems faced by the accounts discussed in the last two sections. At the heart of this approach is the notion of a memory image. My claim will be that there is a way of construing the notion of a memory image that can help elucidate what it means to say that a person has a particular past event before his mind. Yet I shall also argue that the notion of a memory image, thus construed, cannot be divorced from considerations about the particular nature of the project a subject is engaged in when she recalls particular past events.

At first, it may seem somewhat paradoxical to invoke the notion of a memory image at this stage. Traditional accounts of the role of images in memory have often incurred a similar sort of criticism to that which I have just applied to attributional and metarepresentational theories of episodic memory. The particular way the notion of an image figures in these accounts is illustrated in the following example by David Pears (1975). Perchance it might happen to me that I find myself with an image, say, of a certain person. This might then raise questions such as 'Who is this?' or 'Where did I meet this person?', and I may attempt to fit a name or an occasion to the image. As Pears points out, as long as we adhere to this kind of scenario, the image will at best be conceived as something that gets in the way between us and reality, something the occurrence of which calls for further inference or interpretation. It is that picture of an image James has in mind

when he says that 'we paint the remote past, as it were, upon a canvas in our memory, and yet often imagine that we have direct vision of its depths' (James, 1890: i. 643). On this view, the phenomenology of memory is a matter of the subject having before the mind a particular mental state or occurrence in the present. But this was just the feature which turned out to be so problematic about the proposals discussed above, if they are read as proposals providing us with an account of the particular way of thinking about past events which episodic memory makes available to us.

Yet, as Pears points out, quite a different way of looking at the idea of a memory image emerges when we reverse the 'direction of fit' between the image and a question asked by the subject. Starting with a question like 'What does x look like?' or 'Who was at the party?' an image might come to me as the answer. On this view, talk about images assigns them a particular role in the project the subject is engaged in. Specifically, the fact that the image has the content it has is partly explained by the role it plays within that project. The image has the content it does only in virtue of being the outcome of the activity I am engaged in. Saying that the image arrives in answer to a question means saying that it is in virtue of having the image that I find the question settled.

In what follows, I wish to spell out a way in which this proposal may be applied in an account of the phenomenology of episodic recall.⁵ What I wish to argue is that this proposal can provide us with a way of understanding episodic remembering, not as having before the mind some present mental feature, but as having before the mind a particular past event itself.

VIII

The basic thought I wish to draw on can be found in a late work by Ryle, where he says that the memory image 'is not something by means of which one gets oneself to remember. It is the goal, not a vehicle, of his struggle to remember' (1971: 398). The idea I will take from Ryle is that there is a particular connection between the nature of the memory image and the specific project a subject is engaged in when she remembers. The first thing I wish to do is to clarify precisely what this project might be. I will then try to clarify the role memory images play in that project.

I have suggested that episodic memory has a particular epistemic role to play in our knowledge about the world. Above, I have tried to elucidate this role by considering the situation children might be in before the capacity to form episodic memories develops. In particular, I have looked at the knowledge children can be said to possess in virtue of having acquired scripts of certain event sequences.

⁵ My thoughts on this issue are heavily influenced by Roessler's (1999) account of perception on the one hand and Martin's account (Ch. 10, this volume) of the connections between memory, perception, and imagination.

Forming such scripts, I have argued, can be seen to involve a certain ability to generalize from past experience. Yet, in the absence of episodic memory, children's grasp of the kinds of circumstances that make it rational to hold the generalized beliefs they have acquired will still be quite limited. In particular, I have argued, using Bill Brewer's (1996) phrase, that there is a sense in which children miss out on 'how they are right' about the things they believe, in virtue of the fact that they cannot make reference to the particular past events they have experienced in justifying the beliefs they hold.

The arguments I have put forward in this context concern the consequences which a general lack of episodic memories might have on children's epistemic abilities. However, there are also occasions on which the consequences of a lack of episodic memories can become apparent to us as adults because we are unable to remember a specific past occurrence. On route to her holiday destination, a person may suddenly be struck by the thought that she might have left the gas cooker on at home. She may be quite sure that she switched it off, but what eludes her is why this is the right thing to believe. And the reason for her worry is that she cannot retrieve the right kinds of memory of the things she did before she left the house. I think cases such as this can help us understand more clearly the sense in which episodic remembering can be a struggle, as Ryle puts it. The point here is not so much that episodic remembering always involves a painful process of rooting around in memory (though it sometimes does). Rather, it is that episodic memory involves a project whose success is not guaranteed. It is, at least on occasion, something we set out to do, and which has a point for us in that it can provide us with knowledge as to how we are right in believing certain things.

I think that these remarks might help us understand better the idea of a memory image as a central ingredient in episodic remembering. In short, if we find it natural to think of episodic remembering as involving images, it is because we think of episodic remembering as an activity out of the same box as visual perception and imagination. In both perceiving and imagining, the subject is engaged in a particular sort of project. And talk about visual images or images created in imagination can be seen as an attempt at spelling out what is involved in the subject's succeeding in the particular project he is engaged in. In each case, the notion of an image, thus conceived, is part of an account of what it is for the subject to find a particular issue settled. The same, I wish to suggest, applies to episodic remembering and the idea of a memory image. What I wish to argue, in particular, is that episodic remembering involves bringing to bear a particular sort of causal understanding. In episodic remembering, the subject's activity is informed by a grip on a specific set of causal constraints going beyond the here and now. Looking at things this way, episodic remembering can be seen as sharing certain features with imagination, and others with visual perception.

What a subject can imagine is, in part, a matter of how things were with the subject in the past. For instance, it may be that a subject is only able to imagine Simon sitting on a chair because she has, as a matter of fact, met Simon (suppose she hasn't otherwise come across information about Simon). Had she not met

Simon, all that could be ascribed to her is the ability to imagine someone sitting on a chair who looks a certain way, where that, as it happens, is just how Simon looks. More precisely, reference to Simon can only enter into the subject's own imaginative project in so far as she has some grip on the fact that what she imagines is constrained by what Simon looks like. In other words, the subject must have a grip on certain causal constraints which govern the particular imaginative project he is engaged in, and her grip on these constraints must draw on information she acquired in the past—for instance in her past encounters with Simon. The appeal to the past must come in here to explain the subject's ability to recognize what it is to succeed in imagining Simon, rather than, say, some other person or no one in particular.

I think it is in this respect that episodic memory can be said to share a feature with imagination. The point is not just that, in order to be able to turn her mind to a particular past event in memory, the subject must draw on information she acquired when she experienced that event. More specifically, her having experienced the event in question must be part of an explanation as to how she can recognize what it is to succeed in turning her mind to that particular event rather than another, or rather than simply retrieving general knowledge. Just as in the case of imagination, the appeal to the past must come in here to explain the subject's grip on the causal constraints that govern the particular project she is engaged in.

Yet there is also a crucial difference between the two cases. In imagination, the subject's grip on the causal constraints governing the project she is engaged in may be quite minimal. Specifically, the particular circumstances in virtue of which her project meets those constraints may be quite opaque to her. Thus, while it may be true that her ability to imagine, say, a situation involving a particular person relies on knowledge acquired in certain encounters with that person, these encounters themselves need not enter into the subject's mind. This comes out, in particular, through the fact that the spatial circumstances represented in the subject's imagination need not be true to any particular past state of affairs she encountered. For instance, in imagining a situation involving a particular person, it is up to the subject where and in what posture she represents that person as being.

This is different for episodic memory. What I wish to argue is that episodic remembering involves an ability, on the part of the subject, to think of her memories of what happened as the result of particular encounters with the world. And the spatial content of episodic memory plays a crucial role in explaining that ability. Specifically, while there is a sense in which episodic remembering can involve a certain amount of reconstruction, I think it is nevertheless plausible to say that, in episodic memory, the subject is essentially passive with regard to the spatial content delivered. More to the point, I wish to suggest that the way in which episodic memory itself makes spatial information available plays a crucial part in explaining the subject's ability to recognize what it is to succeed in turning her mind to a particular past event.

To clarify this idea, we may look at a similar way in which causal understanding and spatial content are connected in visual perception. A central claim in much recent work on visual perception is that making perceptual judgements involves having a grip on the spatial conditions underlying the perceptibility of objects. In Gareth Evans's words (1982: 222), it involves the ability 'to think of one's perception of the world as simultaneously due to [one's] position in the world, and to the condition of the world at that position.' Johannes Roessler (1999; see also Eilan, 1998) takes up Evans's idea in arguing that, in visual perception, the subject brings to bear a particular kind of causal understanding which can be spelled out in terms of a grasp, on the part of the subject, of these spatial enabling conditions of perception. That is to say, the subject is engaged in a project of informing herself about the world which is guided by her grip on the fact that what she can see depends on where she herself is located, for instance in the sense that there must be a clear line of sight between her and the object. The judgement the subject arrives at relies on the fact that, in visual perception, objects are presented in such a way that their spatial configuration and location is open to view.

What I wish to suggest is that making judgements about the past on the basis of episodic memory similarly involves having a grip on a particular set of causal conditions which must be fulfilled if the subject is to be able to remember them. And, again, the spatial content of memory plays a crucial role in explaining how the subject can bring this causal understanding to bear. As we might put it, the feature episodic memory shares with visual perception is that they both involve a grasp, on the part of the subject, of the fact that the information available to her is the result of an encounter with the world at a certain location. Only, when it comes to episodic memory, the information the subject relies on concerns spatial locations the subject has occupied in the past, that is, where she was when certain events happened. In other words, episodic remembering involves a project which is guided by the subject's grip on the fact that whether she can remember certain events depends on where she was at the time when they happened. It is in this sense that the subject's ability to recognize what it is to succeed in turning her mind to a particular past event relies on the spatial information delivered by memory. In episodic memory, the world as it was comes before the subject's mind in such a way that it solves at the same time for what happened and for what puts her into a position to know what happened, namely the fact that she was around to witness the event in question. By making apparent that things *were* open to view as they happened, episodic memory also makes apparent what allows us to remember them.

IX

If the proposal I have sketched is along the right lines, I think it might help us clarify the role memory images play in episodic remembering. I have said that

episodic remembering should be seen as involving a specific kind of project the subject is engaged in. Success in that project is determined by a set of causal constraints, specifically by where the subject was at a particular time in the past. One way of making sense of the idea of the subject's having a memory image, on this view, is to think of it as the successful outcome of the project he is engaged in. Talk about memory images, in this sense, is meant to capture the way particular past events can come before our mind only if we have been around to witness them.

However, the idea of a memory image, thus construed, can also help us make sense of the particular role episodic memory plays in our knowledge of the world. Episodic memory, I have suggested, provides us with a grasp of the reality certain of our beliefs are answerable to, or, in other words, with a grip on how we are right about certain things. I have said that episodic remembering involves bringing to bear a specific kind of causal understanding. The project which the subject is engaged in, we might say, is informed by an understanding that there are further conditions to be met, apart from an event's actually having happened, before he can remember it. It is in this sense that episodic memory can be said to present the subject with a world that is mind-independent. It involves grasping that the events he remembers could have happened without his knowing about them. To say that the subject understands that there are further conditions to be met, apart from an event's having happened, before he can remember it, is precisely a way of spelling out how the subject can make sense of this independence. Yet, arguably, for the subject to be able to exercise this kind of understanding, the obtaining of those further conditions must be something which the subject is, in a certain sense, aware of when he remembers. And this is just the way in which the idea of a memory image, construed along the lines I have proposed, can come in: the image, in this sense, makes manifest to the subject the past accessibility of the remembered event in experience.

To clarify the picture of episodic memory I have in mind, let me draw out two important respects in which it differs from attributional and metarepresentational accounts of episodic memory. On my view, the causal understanding involved in episodic memory consists in a grasp of certain spatiotemporal constraints on remembering, that is, of the fact that we must have been around to witness an event before we can remember it. Note, however, that the form of reasoning this involves is quite different from similar forms of reasoning invoked by attributional or metarepresentational theories. First, in as far as mention of one's own past experience can be said to come into this form of reasoning, it is through the idea that one can only remember the past event because one was around to witness it. This kind of causal understanding may well be quite distinct from the ability to think of the causal relations in which one's mental states stand to each other or their representational nature, as attributional and metarepresentational theories seem to imply. Secondly, this kind of causal understanding is here invoked to explain what allows us to grasp the enabling conditions of memory. That is to say, it is supposed to capture the way in which we make sense of the

fact that what we can remember is as much down to us (i.e. where we have been at certain times in the past) as to what has happened. This does not entail that we infer that we have had certain experiences in the past from the qualitative nature of certain mental occurrences in the present, as the attributional account suggests. It also does not entail that episodic remembering is a matter of being in a mental state which has as its content that it has been caused by a past experience.

To conclude, I wish to return to the suggestion made by Pears that episodic memory can be seen as an activity which is guided by a certain question the subject has, and that it is in virtue of having a memory image that the subject finds the question settled. What I have tried to do is draw a connection between the epistemology of episodic memory and its phenomenology. I have suggested that episodic memory can indeed be seen as providing us with answers to a particular kind of question. Turning our minds to certain events we have experienced allows us to see how we are right about certain things we believe. But I have also suggested that the idea of a memory image plays a crucial part in an account of what it is to turn our minds to the past in this way. The answer comes to us in virtue of our having a memory image that brings a particular past event before our mind.

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