

12 You don't know what happened

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12.1 Introduction

You know that rain comes from clouds and that fire requires fuel. This kind of knowledge is *propositional*. You know *that* something is so. What you know is, or has the structure of, a proposition. You've got a lot of this knowledge.

You remember a lot too. You remember that you have an important deadline next week. You remember feeling relieved when you met your last deadline. There's a subtle difference in the kind of thing you remember in each case, though. Remembering *that* you have an important deadline is similar to the knowledge I just described: The content of your remembering is a proposition. This remembering, or the memory system responsible for it, is often called 'semantic memory'. What you remember in this way is either true or false.

Remembering an instance in which you had a certain feeling is different. What you remember here isn't a proposition, but rather an event or your experience of a past event. This memory tends to be imagistic, and the event tends to be autobiographical. An event isn't true or false, though your recollection of it can be accurate or inaccurate. This remembering, or the memory system responsible for it, is often called 'episodic memory'.¹

A lot of our knowing is because of our remembering. It would be natural to suppose our propositional knowing is fully explained by semantic memory in particular. After all, they have the same kind of content, namely, propositions. But it could be that we have propositional knowledge from episodic memory too. You might know that you felt relieved, not because you remember that you felt that way, but because you remember the event in which you felt that way. Remembering an event seems like strong evidence that the event occurred. Perhaps we know a lot by episodic memory.

I doubt it. In this chapter I develop two reasons for thinking episodic memory itself doesn't usually yield propositional knowledge of the past, even in the best of cases. Some philosophers (Fernández 2015; Frise n.d.) argue that certain *kinds* of episodic memory do not yield knowledge of the past. They claim, specifically, that episodic memory with a third-person rather than first-person perspective does not yield knowledge.² My claim here is broader, as it is about any kind of episodic memory, regardless of perspective.

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If I am right, one notable consequence is that we might know much less than we had thought. We might have thought, after all, that episodic memory was responsible for a lot of our knowing. Another reason my claim matters is that it can shed light on whether the distinction between episodic and semantic memory matters in epistemology. Semantic memory might, to our surprise, have notably greater epistemic power than episodic memory.

Before I argue for my main claim, I will say more about the nature of knowledge. This way, we will be better positioned to see the limits that I claim episodic memory has. Knowing requires that several conditions are met. A failing to meet one or more of these conditions explains any failing to know. At least four conditions are necessary for a subject to know that a proposition is true: the subject *believes* the proposition; the proposition is *true*; believing the proposition is *justified* for the subject; and the subject's justification does not by mere accident arrive at true belief (the subject is *not Gettiered*).³ The belief, truth, and justification requirements require little explanation. To know, you must think something is true, and it must be true, and you must have good enough reason to think it so. The fourth condition—the Gettier condition—is more opaque. To know, your reason for thinking something is true should have a proper connection to its truth. An example helps make this condition clearer.

Suppose you can't find your shoes. Through the window, you spot a pair of shoes outside, by the front door. They look like yours. So you believe they are. And so you believe your shoes are outside. But those aren't your shoes. They are your housemate's. She stepped in a deceptively deep puddle last night and left the shoes out to dry. But when she entered the house afterward, she tripped over your shoes. That was one stroke of bad luck too many. So she flung your shoes out the door before slamming it shut. You can't see them, but they're outside. You believe that your shoes are outside, and they are, and what you see through the window gives you good enough reason to believe your shoes are outside. But, in a way, it's just a coincidence that you believe both reasonably and correctly in this instance. Your belief is true, but not for the reason you think. So you don't *know* your shoes are outside. You are Gettiered.

Episodic memory typically helps us meet most conditions for knowledge. Episodic memory allows us to recall past events. During this recall, we tend to believe propositions about the past; we meet the belief condition for knowledge.⁴ And we usually meet the truth condition too. Most of what we believe from episodic memory is accurate. And it might seem that we meet the justification and Gettier conditions. Recalling an event appears to give good enough reason for believing it occurred; and if it's true the event occurred, recalling seems properly related to its being true. I will argue we typically do not meet both of these conditions, however. We are usually Gettiered when accurately believing from episodic memory. And when we are not, we usually lack the justification that would enable our knowing. After supporting these arguments, I will evaluate Thomas Senor's (Chapter 11, this volume) claims about justification from episodic memory.

12.2 Getting Gettiered

Here I will give my first argument for the claim that we typically do not know the past by episodic memory itself. The argument is that we are typically Gettiered when justifiedly, accurately believing by way of episodic memory. And if that's so, we typically do not know by way of episodic memory; we are failing to meet a condition necessary for knowing, namely, that we are not Gettiered.

That there is a Gettier condition on knowledge is largely uncontroversial, so I will not defend it. The success of my argument here, then, mostly depends on the premise that episodic memory usually does not help us satisfy this condition.

We don't usually satisfy it, but not because when episodically recollecting we are typically in a silly case, like the one with the shoes in Section 12.1. It's not as if the following is normal. You recall yourself eating Puffy Snaps cereal at breakfast. You then justifiedly believe that you ate cereal for breakfast today, and that's what you indeed ate. So you justifiedly believe a truth here. But you're recalling a different morning. You had Puffy Snaps yesterday. Today you had Snuffy Pops. Episodic memory leads to the justified true belief that you had cereal for breakfast today, but the truth of that belief is poorly connected to your justification. You're Gettiered.

That is not why we rarely satisfy the fourth condition on knowledge by way of episodic memory. To see just why we don't satisfy it, we would do well to state this condition as carefully as possible. Unfortunately, no one has done that, and probably no one will. It's much easier to identify Gettier cases than it is to identify an informative condition that excludes them all. So, I will not state this condition in as much detail as would be ideal.

Still, some attempts at stating it are better than others. One promising attempt is Richard Feldman's. He (Feldman 2003, p. 36) thinks, "The key thing in all Gettier-style cases is that, in some sense, the central belief "essentially depends on a falsehood"". In the example with shoes, your belief that your shoes are outside depends on the falsehood that the shoes you see are yours. The dependence here is essential in that any reason you have for believing they are outside *relies* on the falsehood that the shoes you see are yours. You might not be aware that you rely on this falsehood. And you are not aware it is a falsehood. But you do not have, in Feldman's (2003, p. 36) words, 'a justificatory line that ignores the falsehood'. And that is why you are Gettiered. (When you do have a line that ignores the falsehood, you are not Gettiered, even if you also have a separate line that does depend on it. That's because the dependence here isn't *essential*. There's another line.)

If Feldman is right, we can state the Gettier condition on knowledge more precisely. If a subject knows a proposition, her justification for believing it does not essentially depend on any falsehood (Feldman 2003, p. 37). And even if Feldman is wrong, his condition is plausibly *sufficient* for being Gettiered. That is, it is plausible that *if* a subject's justification essentially depends upon a

falsehood, she is Gettiered, and therefore does not know. This condition could be developed further—exactly what is essential dependence? But it is clear and plausible enough for our purposes.⁵

My controversial premise, again, is that our justified, accurate believing about the past by episodic memory is typically Gettiered. Given Feldman's view, my route to supporting my premise is clear. I must show that our justified, accurate believing about the past by episodic memory usually essentially depends on a falsehood. That is, the following is usual when a subject recalls an event, then forms a reasonable, accurate belief about it: the subject's reasonable believing here depends on something false. And the subject does not have an alternate line of support for the belief that excludes the falsehood.

What is the falsehood, and why suppose it's essential?

The falsehood has to do with how episodic memory works. It's that memory properly functions more or less like an archive. We have experiences of events, and memory keeps a copy of those experiences. The copy is faithful, and nothing tampers with it while in storage. When we remember an event, we are pulling the copy off a shelf and reviewing it. We glimpse just what's already there. Memory functions as it should when there is minimal interference at any point between the original experiencing of the event and the recollecting of it. There is little to no alteration in the depositing, storing, and accessing. Some types of changes are unfortunate but are within the parameters of a properly functioning memory. For example, we forget. Relatively unpopular items disappear from the shelves, degrade, or find themselves replaced by new deposits. But this is to be expected even in a well-maintained archive that runs long enough.⁶

Episodic memory is not in fact so archival. Before anything makes it to a shelf, memory does some screening—there's no need to keep everything, or to keep it all equally accessible. Often we do well enough to save just the contours of an event rather than its every word and strand of hair. And with a little editing, we can more efficiently hold on to what we haven't screened out; instead of storing copies of many relevantly similar experiences, we can store just a template for generating some of these copies. But the template doesn't generate uniformly. The context in which we draw on episodic memory affects the outcome. The circumstances in which we recollect often affect what we recollect.

This is just a brief caricature of how episodic memory works. The point is that episodic memory is normally generative rather than archival. It screens and edits. It synthesises new deposits with other experiences, past and imagined. Even during retrieval, information remains malleable.⁷

This would come as a surprise to a typical subject. It's normal to have beliefs about the past from episodic memory. It's normal for these beliefs to rely on one's understanding of how episodic memory works. But it's not normal to understand how episodic memory really works. The typical subject takes for granted a folk theory in which episodic memory is archival (see Simons & Chabris 2011). The beliefs from episodic memory that the subject has about the past rely on this falsehood.

Now I show the dependence on this falsehood is essential. That is, suppose a subject episodically recalls an experience of a past event. Typically, if this recall for her supports believing that p (where p is a proposition about the past), the support in part relies on the falsehood that memory is archival. My claim here, then, is that without this falsehood, episodic memory rarely supports believing p .

When episodic recall supports believing p , it's because the truth of p is part of the best explanation available to the subject for why she recalls p .⁸ You recall an event in which you saw fireworks on the Fourth of July. Suppose this makes it reasonable for you to believe that you saw fireworks on the Fourth of July. How could that be? It's because your seeing fireworks then is part of the best explanation you have for why you would now recall seeing them then. You have other explanations available (for example, you wish you hadn't spent July 4 eating sugary cereal alone, and so you're confabulating an alternative past), but the best ones all include your actually seeing fireworks then.

Now, when the truth of p is *part* of the best explanation for recall, it is not the only part. Other parts involve how memory works. Other parts of the explanation include, for example, memory functioning in such a way that it is a good guide for believing. When recalling supports believing p , it's because the best explanation of the recalling involves both the truth of p as well as memory functioning in a way that puts us in touch with the past. Your recalling seeing fireworks on the Fourth of July supports your believing you saw them then. Part of the best explanation of your recalling seeing fireworks is that you saw them then *and* that memory puts you in touch with what you saw.

An explanation of your recall that omits how memory works does not make sense of how recall is relevant to the past. On this sort of explanation, recalling seeing fireworks says as little about the actual past as merely *imagining* seeing fireworks does.

The archival view sheds light on how episodic recall is relevant to the past. On this view, memory functions in a trustworthy way, one likely enough to put us in touch with what happened. Memory preserves a faithful record of what happened, and recall is a matter of reviewing the record. The archival view helps facts about past events explain our recalling those events in the present.

A typical subject does not have an explanation of the recall that omits the archival view but that includes facts about the past being a certain way. The typical subject does not have an alternative model of how memory works, on which memory puts us in touch with the past.

Of course, the subject could imagine such a model. Or the subject could learn about how episodic memory really works—how it is generative. In fact, episodic memory is generative in a way that still puts us in touch with the past. It's not an archive, but that is no flaw. Surprisingly enough, the way it alters what it receives, keeps, and delivers does not compromise the likely truth of what it delivers, or is disposed to deliver. It's still a good guide to the truth. If the subject has learned this, then for that subject, on the best explanations of episodically recalling the past being a certain way, the past is that way.

The typical subject has not learned this. The typical subject is unaware that memory is generative (and unaware that memory could still function generatively while guiding belief well). On all of the best explanations of her recall that the typical subject already has available, episodic memory is archival. So the following is true for the typical subject. Her support from episodic memory for believing about the past essentially depends on a falsehood, namely, the falsehood about how memory works.

I have shown, in other words, that the typical subject's justification from episodic memory alone essentially depends on a falsehood. But on Feldman's view, if a subject knows a proposition, her justification for believing it does not essentially depend on any falsehood. So I have shown that, given Feldman's view, the typical subject who accurately and justifiably believes what episodic memory delivers is Gettiered. Episodic memory does not give her knowledge of the past.⁹

12.3 Gettiered or bust: A dilemma

Here I argue, for another reason, that episodic memory itself typically fails to provide knowledge of the past. The first reason mainly had to do with how episodic memory functions differently from what we had assumed, in an important way. The reason here, however, is not centrally about how memory functions. It's about how often episodic memory is correct. During recollection, episodic memory represents the past as being various ways. Sometimes it represents the past as it was, and other times it misrepresents the past. It might be that episodic memory is *usually* accurate. Still, I claim that it misrepresents *often*, and non-trivially.

This is not to say that episodic memory *usually* misrepresents. But it's at least not rare. Often it's predictable. To show it often misrepresents, it would be good to make clear just what sorts of things episodic memory represents, and then to make clear that it is often inaccurate. Unfortunately, it's not clear just what sorts of things episodic memory represents. When recalling an event in which I saw fireworks on the Fourth of July, does memory represent something in that event *as* fireworks? Or is that simply how I now interpret something in that memory? The content of episodic recollection merits greater investigation. I will not undertake that here.

As for whether episodic memory is often inaccurate, this is largely an empirical issue. And the empirical literature does support this (see, among many others, Schacter 2001; Schacter et al. 2011). (A little reflection does too. Since episodic memory is generative, it's unlikely that all it generates will be spot on.) It is not rare for imagination to alter the details of an episodically recalled event, or for imagination rather than experience to be the origin of a recalled event. It is also not rare for memory to incorporate information acquired after an event into our recollection of it, for memory to confabulate altogether new events or details of events, or for memory to present in recollection our interpretation of past experiences rather than experiences themselves.

I will not explore further how memory often misrepresents. What's important is that it does. And so, I claim, a dilemma emerges. Does a subject have evidence that memory misrepresents so often? Suppose the answer is yes, she has this evidence. I will argue that she therefore typically does not satisfy the *justification* condition for knowledge of the past from episodic memory. Suppose the answer is no, the subject does not have this evidence. I will argue that she therefore typically does not satisfy the *Gettier* condition for knowledge of the past from episodic memory. On either answer, a typical subject does not know the past by way of episodic memory. So she does not know it this way.

Let's start with the yes answer. We're supposing a subject has evidence that memory misrepresents often. I am not saying the subject thereby lacks *any* justification from episodic memory for believing propositions about the past. Episodic memory still typically does give justification of a sort. It gives *prima facie* justification. That is, it gives justification which, in the absence of reason to refrain from believing, justifies believing *overall*. And justification can vary in strength. One could have merely some justification for believing, all the way up to maximal justification. Episodic memory could still typically give very strong *prima facie* justification for believing propositions about the past. But evidence about how episodic memory misrepresents is *some* reason to refrain from believing. This evidence is a *partial defeater* for the justification from episodic memory. It reduces some but perhaps not all overall justification for believing.

I noted that knowledge requires justification. It is time to be more precise. I did not note that this justification must be overall and not merely *prima facie*. And I did not note how strong it must be. Philosophers tend to agree that it must be especially strong, if not Herculean. If that is right, then even a partial defeater can easily prevent knowledge. A partial defeater can turn *especially* strong overall justification into justification that is merely *very* strong overall. And that slight reduction is all it takes to fail to have the justification knowledge requires.

Evidence that episodic memory often misrepresents is a partial defeater. It is a partial defeater for just about any justification episodic memory provides for believing propositions about the past. The scope of the defeat is broad.

And this seems exceptional. There could be evidence that some other potential conduit to knowledge often misrepresents. But it would not obviously be a partial defeater for just about any justification from that conduit. For example, we might have evidence that perception often misrepresents. Perhaps often, the world appears to be one way when it is in fact another. But perceptual misrepresentation is easier to flush out, even by further perception itself. If a subject has a misleading visual impression that the Mueller-Lyer lines are of unequal length, further visual experience easily brings the error to light; the subject can visually compare the lines to a ruler held up to them simultaneously. Perception reveals the error of its ways.

Episodic memory is not as well equipped to bring its own errors to light. It lends fewer rulers. Other memories or background information could help us discern whether memory is misrepresenting. But, given memory's generative

nature, this misrepresenting could instead reshape the very information by which we might flush errors out. If I want to check by memory whether I really saw fireworks on the Fourth of July, I can try to remember what else happened that day. But I might end up reconstructing anything else I recall in a way that fits with my seeing fireworks then.

Episodic memory often misrepresents. And it is hard to tell just how often or gravely it misrepresents. A subject who learns that memory often misrepresents will have little sense of how extensive the misrepresentation is. Little is clearly safe. The subject has available explanations for why she recalls an event, explanations on which the event did not go quite that way. The subject has a partial defeater for almost any justification she has from episodic memory.

This defeater is ordinarily itself undefeated. The subject has some reason to doubt, and little reason to doubt the doubt. Usually, the subject will not have further evidence indicating that, in a given recollection, episodic memory is not in fact misrepresenting. Since this partial defeater is typically undefeated for the subject, her level of overall justification from episodic memory is not strong enough for knowledge. Even small reasons to doubt hinder knowing. It's not by episodic memory that she knows the past.

Now for the dilemma's second horn. I've suggested that memory often misrepresents. On this horn of the dilemma, the subject lacks evidence that this is so. The subject who lacks the evidence about how episodic memory often misrepresents may have overall justification from episodic memory that is strong enough for knowledge. But this subject, I claim, is typically Gettiered at best. That is, if the subject has justification (and true belief), it essentially depends on a falsehood. The falsehood is that normally functioning memory rarely or only trivially misrepresents.

I have already argued that this is indeed a falsehood. Now I must show that the typical subject's justification essentially depends on it. That is, she will not have an alternate line of justification that omits this falsehood. At first glance, what I am to show seems far-fetched. After all, the subject might easily have alternate lines of justification that swap out the falsehood for a truth, such as: normally functioning memory *usually* represents the past accurately; or, normally functioning memory is a good if imperfect guide for belief.

I grant that these are indeed truths. And I grant that they are parts of available lines of justification. That is, I grant the following. Take a typical subject who lacks the evidence about how memory often misrepresents. Suppose she episodically recalls an event in which p . She has a line of justification from episodic memory for believing p . And this line depends on only truths. Indeed, I grant that the line may even *essentially* depend on only truths.

However, this line of justification is lacking in an important regard. We have seen that knowledge requires not just justification, but overall justification that is quite high. A line of justification on which memory is merely *usually* accurate, or merely a *good* guide for belief, might be strong. But it is not knowledge-level. It is high, but not quite high enough. The subject's justification here might not essentially depend on a falsehood, but the subject's *knowledge-level* justification

does. So the subject's knowledge-level justification leaves her Gettiered at best, and her other justification from episodic memory is not knowledge-level. So she does not know.

In Section 12.2, I argued that a typical subject who has justified true belief from episodic memory is Gettiered. Here I have presented a dilemma, the second horn of which argues the same. I note, however, that the subject is Gettiered in each argument for a different reason.¹⁰ The subject's justification depends on a different falsehood. In the previous section, the falsehood centrally had to do with how memory normally or properly works. In the current dilemma, the falsehood has to do with memory's accuracy. How memory works, of course, can indicate whether it's often accurate. But we should not mistake facts about memory's functioning *to be* facts about its accuracy. The falsehoods that I claim the subject essentially depends on in each argument are distinct. Hence, we have distinct arguments for my claim that episodic memory ordinarily does not yield knowledge of the past.

Episodic memory misrepresents, and not rarely. A subject either has evidence of this or she doesn't. A subject with evidence of this typically has a defeater for her justification from episodic memory for believing propositions about the past. This subject does not know from episodic memory how the past was. A subject who lacks this evidence is typically Gettiered at best. Her knowledge-level justification from episodic memory depends essentially on something false. Either way, episodic memory usually does not provide knowledge of the past. By episodic memory, usually we don't know what happened.

12.4 Senor on the epistemology of episodic memory

My focus has been on whether we know much from episodic memory. I have discussed justification here only as it has pertained to my claims about knowledge. Propositional knowledge requires justification, something I have granted that episodic memory provides. I have argued, however, that when a subject has evidence about how episodic memory misrepresents, episodic memory does not provide overall justification strong enough for knowledge. But a closer look at justification from episodic memory is in order.

Thomas Senor (Chapter 11, this volume) takes this look. He examines how episodic memory might provide justification at all. Episodic recollection has certain outputs. Senor reflects on how these outputs relate to what epistemologists evaluate—namely, doxastic attitudes, or the epistemic support we have for these attitudes. Senor calls for more adequate modelling of episodic memory in contemporary epistemology. He suggests a leading current model is incomplete at best, and he proposes some improvements. I will evaluate some of his main claims here. I note that Senor shows little alarm about whether it is possible to adequately model episodic memory. And Senor does not show concern about potential threats to our having justification or knowledge from episodic memory. Still, Senor's remarks appear at least consistent with my main claim that we typically don't know from episodic memory alone.

The model of episodic memory Senor critiques is Kourken Michaelian's (2016). Senor argues that Michaelian's model inadequately characterises the *output* of episodic memory processing. On this model, episodic recollection involves producing a representation. This representation is not automatically endorsed, but is first evaluated for likely accuracy. A metacognitive endorsement mechanism might endorse content at the conclusion of episodic memory processing. Michaelian's model interprets any endorsed content as belief. If this model is adequate, then some tasks of a complete epistemology of episodic memory become clear. Episodic memory generates a doxastic attitude. An epistemology here describes, among other things, what this causal process must be like for it to provide justification.

Senor finds this model lacking. It identifies endorsed content as belief. But for a few reasons, Senor thinks this is incorrect. For one, endorsed content from episodic recollection outstrips the content of any single belief. In endorsed content much more is represented than in the content of any one belief. The metacognitive endorsement mechanism may endorse a complex and detailed representation of an event, or of the subject's experience of that event, across many sense modalities. The subject is recalling what happened and how she heard and saw and felt what happened. But no single belief of hers captures all this nuance. Additionally, the relevant type of belief has content different in kind from what is endorsed in episodic recollection. Belief here has propositional content; a subject believes that *p*. But an endorsed representation from episodic recollection is of an event or of an experience of an event, and this is not propositional in form. It is unclear whether Senor thinks endorsed content and the content of belief always differ in these ways. They might not. Perhaps, for example, endorsed content only sometimes outstrips that of belief. But if there is any case in which the endorsing and believing are not identical in content, then the endorsing is not identical with the believing.

Senor seems to show Michaelian's model is incomplete at best. Presumably, eventually, episodic memory yields belief. But the model leaves epistemologists wondering: just how does episodic memory do this? In the absence of an answer to that question, the model does not allow a comprehensive epistemology of episodic memory.

Revising Michaelian's model in a way that avoids Senor's concerns might not be difficult. Senor might be right that endorsement isn't, or doesn't yield, just a single belief. But perhaps endorsement is, or results in, a multitude of beliefs, and these beliefs jointly exhaust the content of what's endorsed. This minimally revises Michaelian's model, and could sidestep the concern about endorsed content outstripping the content of belief. I don't think this revision will ultimately succeed, but Senor does not address it, and it handles one of his concerns.

In light of his objections, Senor proposes what we perhaps should understand to be a supplement to Michaelian's model. It further articulates how a belief that is based on the output of episodic memory processing is justified. Senor and Michaelian both accept process reliabilism, according to which the justification of a belief is a matter of the reliability of the process yielding it. Unsurprisingly,

Senor's supplement appears process reliabilist-friendly. It states three necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for the justification of belief from episodic memory. All three conditions centre on some kind of reliability:

S's episodic memory belief that P is *prima facie* justified iff:

1. The process that produces the belief from the quasi-sensory representation reliably extracts the particular propositional content from the representation;
2. The combination of the information-producing and endorsement-monitoring systems reliably produces [the representation] (i.e., representations so formed are more or less accurate depictions of past experiences); and
3. the original experience is a reliable depiction of (i.e., mostly accurately reflects) the facts of the original experienced event (typically, facts about the agent's immediate physical environment, perhaps together with conscious mental/emotional states at the time).

(Senor, Chapter 11, this volume)

The rough idea is this. Justified belief from episodic recollection will be based on content that is endorsed in the episodic memory processing. The belief, as noted, has propositional content, while the endorsed content is non-propositional. But the content types are related. A justified belief here results from a process that will 'reliably extract' propositional content from the non-propositional content. (Presumably, the content of the justified belief just is the reliably extracted content.) Additionally, what's endorsed needs to itself have been produced 'reliably'; the content endorsed in recollection is faithful to the remembering subject's past experience. Finally, the subject's original experience has a further kind of reliability: it was mostly accurate.¹¹

Senor has helpfully found an apparent lacuna in the epistemology of memory, and his attempt to address it has many virtues. I'll limit my main remarks about his proposal to three brief points.

The first point has to do with how Senor's three conditions matter for the general epistemological view he endorses, process reliabilism. At first glance, reliabilism seems amenable to these conditions, since they too place reliability at the core of epistemic justification. But if Senor's proposals are correct—if he has identified three conditions necessary for justification from episodic memory—then traditional process reliabilism turns out to be *false*. That is my first point. Traditional process reliabilism states two sufficient conditions for justified belief, plus a claim that any justified belief meets one of those two conditions.¹² On neither sufficient condition must all or perhaps even any of Senor's three conditions be met. So if Senor's conditions are indeed necessary for justified belief from episodic memory, then traditional reliabilism states two false sufficient conditions for justification. His proposal departs from tradition.

One might reply that Senor's proposal simply improves on traditional process reliabilism. And that might be correct. But if it is correct, I note then that

traditional process reliabilism turns out, all along, to have faced an unappreciated problem centring on episodic memory. It failed to account for how belief from episodic memory is justified. It implied there is justification in cases where there was none. This problem is why the traditional view needed improvement. And it is notable to discover flaws in such a celebrated view.

My next point is on the third of Senor's three conditions. That condition says justified belief from episodic memory must be about an event that the subject originally experienced mostly accurately. This condition has some unintuitive consequences. If there was no original experience—if the subject is misremembering and did not in fact experience the event—this third condition is not met. So there cannot be justified episodic memory belief in such a case, even when episodic memory is reliable, functioning well overall, providing good evidence, but simply not being true to past experience. Additionally, on Senor's third condition, there is no justified episodic memory belief in cases where the original experience was not mostly accurate. The original experience may have been part of a reliable belief formation process, and may have supplied good evidence, but was overall misleading. In some cases, the original experience even *originally* led to justified belief. But on Senor's third condition, the episodic memory belief sharing the content of the original justified belief cannot be justified. This would be because the original experience was not mostly accurate. Not only is this verdict on the episodic memory belief questionable, but so is the asymmetry.

My final point is on whether we must accept Senor's proposal. He (this volume) says he has 'outlined how a reliabilist might think about the epistemic status of both episodic memory and episodic memory belief'. Senor criticises Michaelian's model of episodic recollection, and his proposal is meant to overcome that specific model's flaws. That, I take, is the main consideration in favour of reliabilists accepting Senor's proposal. And if Senor's proposal indeed overcomes these flaws, it has something in its favour. Still, it doesn't follow that it has enough in its favour to recommend it, even to reliabilists. We have not heard whether there are promising models of episodic recollection other than Michaelian's, ones that do not share its alleged flaws. If there are any alternatives that are friendly to reliabilism, then there may be no need for reliabilists to accept Senor's proposal. Similarly, if there are other promising reliabilist-friendly fixes to Michaelian's model, then Senor's proposal has less to recommend it.

So we have not seen that reliabilists must accept the proposal. And we have not heard about the prospects of non-reliabilist supplements to Michaelian's model. I will briefly sketch one alternative to Senor's proposal. This alternative is simpler than Senor's and is acceptable to reliabilists and non-reliabilists. It is therefore at best unclear whether Senor's proposal has enough in its favour to recommend it. This is my final point.

Here is how endorsement in episodic memory may work in an epistemologically relevant way. Endorsement in episodic recollection is or results in something like *refining*—refining what a representation is evidence for. Prior to endorsement, the representation is evidence for little. This is because the representation is not labelled with an origin. It may originate from a past event, or

from mere imagination. Endorsed content is content evaluated as likely enough to originate from a past event. Endorsement is, or creates, or indicates, evidence for the subject that a particular event occurred in the past. Endorsing content *prima facie* justifies the subject in believing that the past contains an event as represented by the endorsed content. Usually the content of no single belief will exhaust the endorsed content. But that's not a problem. Endorsement can simply justify the subject in believing many propositions. The subject might form some justified beliefs based on the endorsed representation, but probably does not form all she could.

This looks like a simple but adequate supplement to Michaelian's model of episodic memory processing. Senor's supplement looks more complex and might appeal only to reliabilists. For now, it's at best unclear whether we should accept his proposal.

12.5 Conclusion

I have raised some doubts about whether we should accept Senor's attempt to fill an apparent gap in the epistemology of episodic memory.

And for two reasons I have suggested that to know the past from episodic memory alone is unusual. But this is not as bad as it may seem. We can still know the past from other sources, even from other forms of memory. Perhaps semantic memory is not vulnerable to arguments paralleling those I have given in this chapter, and so semantic memory can typically provide knowledge of the past. Perhaps episodic memory, when joining hands with semantic memory, typically can too. And even if episodic memory does not itself provide knowledge, it can still provide strong justification for a broad range of beliefs about the past. And much of our justification from episodic memory is not fully defeated, if defeated at all.

And perhaps episodic memory does more. The kind of knowledge of the past I've said it rarely gives is propositional knowledge. Maybe episodic memory offers something else—non-propositional knowledge of the past. It is a task for tomorrow, however, to figure out just what that is, and how episodic memory yields it.

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Notes

- 1 See Tulving (1985) for influential discussion of the semantic and episodic memory distinction.
- 2 For criticism, see McCarroll (2017, 2018).

- 3 Gettier (1963) shows the first three conditions jointly are insufficient for knowledge.
- 4 It's less obvious whether we satisfy the belief condition for knowledge when not recalling. For discussion, see Frise (2018a).
- 5 Of course, Feldman's view is not the default, not even in the context of discussing knowledge from episodic memory. For alternative views in this context see, for example, Michaelian (2013). But no view is the default, and it helps to work with some view or other.
- 6 For more on forgetting, see Frise (2018b).
- 7 The literature on reconstruction in episodic memory swells. See De Brigard (2014), Michaelian (2011), and Schacter (2001), among others.
- 8 For amenable accounts of evidential support, see Conee and Feldman (2008), Frise (2018c), and McCain (2014).
- 9 My argument has to do with how having just a nontrivially false folk theory of episodic memory prevents knowledge from episodic memory alone. If this is right, it might suggest more generally that having just a nontrivially false folk theory of x prevents knowledge from x . And if that is right, we are probably Gettiered far more often than we had realised, since nontrivially false folk theories abound. It's worth exploring, then, whether the scope of knowledge is much smaller than we had supposed. Cf. Hetherington (2011, p. 81), who thinks that a subject whose perceptual belief is based on a folk theory of perception is Gettiered. Hetherington, however, denies that the subject thereby fails to know, and argues that knowing is compatible with being Gettiered. This denial is striking. If it is correct, then my argument in this section may not show that a typical subject who accurately and justifiably believes what episodic memory delivers lacks knowledge. Rather, my argument may show such a subject is Gettiered. Evaluating Hetherington's denial, however, is beyond the scope of this chapter.
- 10 For a potential third but rarer route to being Gettiered by episodic memory, see Conee and Feldman (2004, pp. 71–72).
- 11 Although each condition in Senor's supplement involves reliability, each may involve a different kind, and perhaps none is identical to the kind of process reliabilists claim is essential to justification (for discussion of that kind of reliability, see Frise 2018d). It is unclear, then, which leading non-reliabilist views are incompatible with Senor's supplement.
- 12 See Goldman (1979) and Feldman (2003). For discussion of the two sufficient conditions in the context of memory, see Frise (2021).

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