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Author biography

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Editor's response, Sven Bernecker and Kourken Michaelian

When *Memory Studies'* book review editors originally proposed the idea of this review symposium, the intention was for us, as editors of *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Memory*, to respond to the reviewers' criticisms of the volume. When we received the reviews, however, they turned out (we are pleased to say) to contain few real criticisms. After consultation with the editors, we have therefore opted to combine our responses to the reviews (which, we wish to emphasize, constitute valuable contributions to the growing field of philosophy of memory in their own right) with reflections on topics that either have garnered increased attention since the publication of the handbook or are poised to in the near future and hence might be included in a potential second edition of the handbook.

Some context may be of use here: we began work on the handbook in 2014. This was well before Issues in Philosophy of Memory (IPM), the first major international conference in the area, took place in Cologne; indeed, the handbook had just been published when the conference occurred in 2017. As we write this introduction in 2019, IPM2 has just taken place in Grenoble, and we are already looking forward to IPM3 in Bogotá in 2021. There have, in the intervening years, been more workshops, special issues, authored books, and edited books in the area than we can hope to list here; indeed, there is now even a book series dedicated to the philosophy of memory and imagination.[1] If, in 2014, the idea of the philosophy of memory as a distinct field of research was still something of a novelty, this is now, in 2019, most definitely no longer the case. The contours of the field have become much clearer, and reflecting on the similarities and differences between the topics covered in the handbook and those that have figured most prominently in subsequent discussions will provide a sense of the field's current directions and possibilities.

The handbook is divided into nine parts: (I) The nature of memory; (II) The metaphysics of memory; (III) Memory, mind, and meaning; (IV) Memory and the self; (V) Memory and time; (VI) The social dimension of memory; (VII) The epistemology of memory; (VIII) Memory and morality; and (IX) History of philosophy of memory. Six of the book's nine parts, in other words, are dedicated to descriptive questions, two are dedicated to normative issues, and one is dedicated to historical approaches. An informal survey of the recent literature[2] makes it clear that the topics covered in the descriptive section—such as the phenomenology of memory, the causal theory of memory, memory traces, observer memory, memory and narrativity, and memory as mental time travel—continue to attract the lion's share of attention. Judging by the contributions to IPM2[3] and

other recent meetings, this is unlikely to change in the near future: these topics concern episodic memory above all, and this form of memory continues to attract far more attention than any other. This fact suggests three observations.

First, regarding the descriptive section itself, we remarked at the conclusion of our introduction to the handbook that we had been unable to include chapters on nondeclarative memory or on working memory. There are signs of new interest in these topics (e.g. Carruthers, 2015; Pavese and De Brigard, 2019), and it seems likely that, as the number of researchers working in the field increases, forms of memory other than episodic memory will attract increased attention. (We include autobiographical memory, which is closely linked to but remains distinct from episodic memory, under this heading; see Rowlands, 2017.) It is noteworthy, however, that the overwhelming majority of descriptive work on declarative memory continues to concern episodic memory— there is a conspicuous lack of descriptive work on semantic memory.

Second, regarding the normative section, there continues to be relatively little work done on the epistemology of memory and even less on the ethics of memory. There are signs of new interest in these topics, too (Bernecker and Grundmann, 2019; Glannon, 2019; Senor, 2019), and, again, it seems likely that they will begin to attract increased attention. We note that, just as there is little descriptive work on semantic memory, there is little epistemological work on episodic memory; both topics are ripe for growth. Like the epistemology of memory, the ethics of memory is an underexplored and promising area. Perhaps for this reason, Felipe Rocha L. Santos, in his review, focuses on the three ethical chapters in the handbook. Rocha observes that ethical discussions to date largely deal only with individual remembering, leaving aside transactive and extended remembering (see Heersmink and Sutton, 2018). The possibility of transactive and extended memory systems raises interesting moral questions regarding the ownership of memories and the right to be forgotten. Might I, for example, be obligated to attempt to "erase" certain memories if another member of a transactive memory system of which I am part himself tries to do so? This and related questions concerning the ethics of transactive and extended memory systems are still largely unexplored. What Rocha says of the ethics of memory, moreover, is true of the philosophy of memory more generally: most work focuses on individual memory, with social aspects of remembering largely being left aside. There is a clear need, for example, for more philosophical work on collective memory; with luck, publications such as the planned translation of Halbwachs' *The Social Frameworks of Memory* will stimulate such work.

Third, regarding the historical section, the volume of work on the history of philosophical approaches to memory is relatively low (but see Nikulin, 2015). There is a need for more such work, as current debates often proceed largely without awareness of the historical origins and antecedents of contemporary conceptions; recent work on the history of the psychology of memory (Wagoner, 2017) might serve as a model for new work on the history of the philosophy of memory. Despite the low volume of work in this area, or perhaps because of this, Sarah Aronowitz, in her review, sees the fact that the handbook juxtaposes systematic and historical chapters as being one of its main strengths. Contemporary philosophy of memory, she suggests, supplies conceptual resources that allow us to gain a deeper understanding of the issues in the historical debates; the history of philosophy of memory, in turn, provides promising suggestions for resolving persistent issues in contemporary philosophy of memory. Aronowitz also points out that, while the historical section includes chapters devoted to a number of continental philosophers, there are no contemporary contributions from the continental tradition. There is indeed a need for more interaction between analytic and continental philosophers interested in memory; publications such as the planned translation of Bergson's *History of Theories of Memory* may stimulate such interactions. Along the same lines, we might point out that, while the historical section includes chapters devoted to a number of nonwestern traditions, there are no contemporary contributions from such

traditions. There is likewise a need for more interactions with nonwestern traditions; fortunately, there are signs that such interactions are beginning to occur (see Ganeri, 2017 and the associated commentaries).

Coming back to episodic memory, there have been several recent developments that a future edition of the handbook ought to take into account. First, there is a new willingness to take post-causal theories of episodic memory—such as the functionalist theory (Fernández, 2019) or the simulation theory (Michaelian, 2016)—seriously. Second, there is a new interest in the function of episodic memory (see Mahr and Csibra, 2018 and the associated commentaries). Third, there is an emerging debate on confabulation and other memory errors (see Robins' (2016) paper and the responses that it has triggered, including a number of papers in Stammers and Bortolotti, 2019). There are clear links between these topics and the more general question of the relationship between memory and imagination. While philosophers of memory have always been concerned with this relationship, it has taken on a new importance as conceptions of memory as a form of mental time travel have come to the fore. The series (mentioned above) on the philosophy of memory and imagination provides a new opportunity for philosophers of memory to investigate it in dialogue with philosophers of imagination. In a related development, philosophers have begun to contribute to the debate on memory and mental time travel in animals. The handbook contains no chapter on this topic; we hope that, by the time that we are in a position to consider a second edition, there will be a sufficient body of work to make such a chapter possible.

In addition to the relationship between memory and imagination, the relationships between memory and other faculties, cognitive processes, and sources of knowledge are beginning to be explored. Two cases are particularly noteworthy: that of perception (Macpherson and Dorsch, 2018) and that of testimony (Wright and Goldberg, in press). There is, however, much more work along these lines to be done. Four examples stand out. First, there has long been a need for a detailed treatment of the relationship between memory and dreaming. Second, given the prominent place accorded to autonoetic consciousness in recent discussions of episodic memory, it is becoming increasingly clear that a systematic treatment of memory and consciousness is also sorely needed. Third, while there has been a good deal of philosophical discussion of the role of metacognition in remembering, there is not, as of yet, a thorough exploration of this topic. Fourth, any theory of remembering can legitimately be expected to have something to say about forgetting, but there is surprisingly little philosophical literature on forgetting; in this case, too, sustained work is needed.

We have sought to emphasize, in this brief discussion, topics that received little coverage in the handbook. Our intention in so doing has most definitely not been to downplay the continuing importance of the topics that are covered. To cite one example, observer memory has come to play a much more prominent role since the handbook was published (e.g. McCarroll, 2018). To cite another example, the question of the factivity of memory continues to attract attention. Lisa Bortolotti and William Hirst, in their reviews, are both concerned with this question. Bortolotti argues that there is empirical reason to think that it is not the accuracy of memory but rather its elaboration and coherence that supports our agency. Hirst, meanwhile, points out that the view that memory is factive flies in the face of the consensus in psychology that remembering is a thoroughly reconstructive process; he acknowledges, however, that psychologists need to account for the fact that we usually take our memories to capture the past and explain what about the reconstructive process justifies our confidence in the accuracy of our memories. We predict that both of these issues—on one hand, factors other than accuracy that might affect the value of memory; on the other hand, the need to reconcile our intuitive trust in memory with its reconstructive character—will be major topics of discussion in coming years.

As the philosophy of memory continues to pick up steam, specialists in other areas can be expected to take note and to make contributions of their own. Indeed, this is already happening to some extent, as researchers begin to explore the implications for memory of general theoretical frameworks (such as enactivism; see Hutto and Myin, 2017) not originally developed with memory in mind or to apply methodologies (such as experimental philosophy; see Dranseika, 2019) that have been tested and refined in other domains to the case of memory. Together with the developments reviewed above, this suggests that the philosophy of memory will continue both to grow in numerical terms and to increase in theoretical sophistication.

By way of conclusion, we wish to thank Sara Aronowitz, Lisa Bortolotti, Felipe Rocha L. Santos, and William Hirst for agreeing to take on the task of reviewing a handbook some 48 chapters and nearly 600 pages long and—crucially!—for finding the time to write such insightful reports. Sincere thanks also to Sarah Robins for coordinating the process and seeing it through to a successful conclusion.

Notes

1. See https://global.oup.com/academic/content/series/p/philosophy-of-memory-and-imagination -pomi/?lang=en&cc=us
2. See PhilMemBib: http://phil-mem.org/philmembib.html
3. See the program available at http://phil-mem.org/events/2019-ipm2.html

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