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UNRELIABLE NARRATOR: MEMORY, ACCURACY AND FUNCTION

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UNRELIABLE NARRATOR: MEMORY,  
ACCURACY AND FUNCTION

A Master's Thesis

by  
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Ankara  
May 2019



*To my grandmother who does not remember me anymore*

UNRELIABLE NARRATOR: MEMORY, ACCURACY AND FUNCTION

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences  
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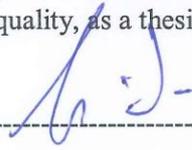
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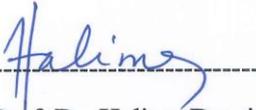
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# ABSTRACT

## UNRELIABLE NARRATOR: MEMORY, ACCURACY AND FUNCTION

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May 2019

If the past is in the past then, why cannot we just let it go? The answer is simple. We are obsessed with our past and it is always running alongside us. Moreover, we are inclined to think that what we remember is true since it is the only resource providing us with the link to the past. In this thesis, I look at different approaches regarding memory and the importance of truth to consider whether memories are reasonably truthful or whether there are cases in which the reason why we make use of memory is more than representing truth. I argue that considering the variety and complexity of memory system, it is not plausible to argue for a single-acting theory which successfully embraces all different functions of memory. Viewed in this light, the notion of truth cannot handle many functions of memory whereas accuracy is a more suitable notion for the job. I consider functions of memory in everyday life instances where accuracy becomes highly variable in order to succeed in the intended functions. In conclusion, I argue that the reason why we make use of our memories is not because they are highly reliable sources about the past, but rather it has social functions where we need to rely on our memories as a tool to satisfy these functions.

Keywords: Accuracy, Everyday memory, Functions of memory, Past experiences, Rememberer

## ÖZET

### GÜVENİLMEZ ANLATICI: BELLEK, DOĞRULUK VE FONKSİYON

Torun, Gülce

Yüksek Lisans, Felsefe Bölümü

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Nazım Keven

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Eğer geçmiş geçmişte kaldıysa, neden aklımızdan çıkaramıyoruz? Cevap basit. Geçmişimize takıntılıyız ve o her zaman bizimle yanımızda akıyor. Üstelik bizi geçmişe bağlayan yegane kaynak hatırladıklarımız olduğundan, bunların doğru olduğunu düşünmeye eğilimliyiz. Bu tezde, hafızaya ilişkin birbirinden farklı yaklaşımları ve hatıraların makul bir şekilde hakikat ile örtüşür olup olmadığını veya hafızayı kullanmamızın sebebinin hakikati temsil etmekten daha fazlası olduğu durumlarda gerçeğin öneminin olup olmadığını gözden geçirmekteyim. Hafıza sisteminin karmaşıklığı ve çeşitliliği düşünüldüğünde, hafızanın bütün işlevlerini başarılı bir şekilde kapsayan tek yönlü işleyen bir teori olabilmesinin makul olmadığını savunuyorum. Bu noktada, hakikat kavramı hafızanın farklı fonksiyonlarının üstesinden gelmek için uygun değilken, doğruluk bu iş için daha uygun bir kavramdır. Hafıza, günlük yaşam örnekleri çerçevesinde ele alındığında, doğruluğun hedeflenen fonksiyonlarda başarılı olabilmesi için oldukça çeşitlilik gösterdiğini ele aldım. Nihayetinde, hafızamızdan faydanlanmamızın nedeninin geçmişimiz hakkında güvenilir bir kaynak oluşundan değil, onun sosyal işlevleri karşılamak üzere itimat ettiğimiz bir araç olduğunu savunuyorum.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Doğruluk, Geçmiş tecrübeler, Günlük hayatta hafıza, Hafızanın fonksiyonları , Hatırlayan

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## INTRODUCTION

When someone says “I remember that ...” it is natural to think that what he says is true. In this paper, I am going to look at different approaches regarding memory and the importance of truth to consider whether memories are supposed to be reasonably truthful or there are cases in which the reason why we make use of memory is more than representing truth. In the end, I will argue that considering the variety and complexity of memory system it is not sensible to argue for a single-acting theory which successfully embraces all different functions of memory. Therefore, my suggestion is that we need to be aware of which functions are in need of being limited by truth and which are not. I will specifically focus on social functions of memory which, I believe, is a place where truth value of memory becomes less important than it thought to be. Since, the reason why we make use of our memories is not because they are highly reliable sources about the past, but rather it has social functions where we need to rely on our memories as a tool to satisfy these functions.

A narrator is an individual who narrates a story. It can be likened to the voice of an author while you are reading a story. An unreliable narrator, on the contrary, is the one who does not tell all the truth about the story for whatsoever reasons. The expression “unreliable narrator” was first put into words by Wayne Booth (1961) in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* as follows: “I have called a narrator reliable when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author’s norms), unreliable when he does not” (Booth, 1961:158-9). Authors may take the form of unreliable narrators just because they take pleasure in doing so or want to create an influential piece of art. I believe that we, as rememberers, are the unreliable narrators whose rendition of events do not reflect the truth and so should be taken with a pinch of salt.

In the first part, before focusing on the function of memory I would like to show you why truth value of memories is a matter of extensive debate. In this sense, I am going to mention several arguments examining the nature of memory and it will be helpful

to see why truth has been recognized as a crucial concept in the discussion of memory. After that, I will pay attention to two important studies in experimental psychology to show that how memory is an active process that is subject to construction and personal interpretation. Taking these into account, I will suggest an alternative notion, accuracy, which is more suitable in comparison to truth when memory is in question. With this renewed concept, I am going to consider functions of memory in which accuracy might become highly variable and pay attention to several motivations leading us to rely upon adjusted memories.

## CHAPTER 1

### CONSIDERING THE NATURE OF MEMORY: THE CAUSAL THEORY OF MEMORY AND MEMORY TRACES

When we think of memory, there is a connection between what the subject remembers and what he experienced before. For instance, I remember that yesterday the weather was beautiful and the reason why I can remember or even talk about it is because I experienced that happening. Imagination, on the other hand, does not necessitate such a direct connection between the past experience and the present representation since I can imagine something which I have never experienced before. In other words, an imagination could be about something that is out of blue. Therefore, a direct relation to a past experience is not necessary.

Martin and Deutscher (1966) cash out this connection in terms of a causal connection. Namely, the connection between the past experience and present representation is regarded as what causes us to have memory. They intend to describe what it is to remember and to do that, they propose an analysis of memory arguing that if an event is to be an example of remembering then it must fulfill the following criteria:

- (1) Subject now represents the event within certain limits of accuracy
- (2) Subject experienced the event when it happened, and
- (3) There is a causal connection between his present representation and his past experience of it.

All three statements are considered to be individually necessary and together sufficient for a representation to be a case of remembering. In the first statement, Martin and Deutscher put an emphasis on truth that if a representation is an instance of memory then it must be represented within certain limits of accuracy. Therefore,

memory must get along with, at least to some extent, what truly happened in the past. I will focus more on this issue in the chapter 2 where I discuss accuracy and truth.

In the third condition, the causal connection in question is also required for remembering to occur and it gives rise to a further element, memory trace, maintaining the link between the past and the present. In other words, memory traces are thought to be the vehicles which make preservation possible. The need for memory trace comes from the idea that a past occurrence is able to cause a present representation therefore there must be something which can sustain contiguity between the past and the present and it is possible through a memory trace. Namely, they enable us to make contact with the past which is no longer available (Robins, 2017). However, if we suppose that memory traces make past experiences available at present then it is important to know how they do so. Since, it is considered as a process which somehow carries one's previous encounters to the present and obviously there is a temporal gap between these two occurrences.

Furthermore, the idea of a memory trace gives rise to the possibility that an experienced past occurrence may not be exactly transferred when the subject recalls at a subsequent time. Since, the temporal gap between them might cause memory to be distorted or altered in time. At this point, two arguments considering whether truth is a central concern in the discussion of memory or whether it takes a back seat in accordance with the reasons why we need memory, lead us to have a sharp distinction that is worth mentioning here. One is called 'archival' view and it suggests that memory is a resource to provide us with exact copies of what happened in the past. Since memory is considered to be something like a video recorder storing representations with a perfect accuracy and clarity and then make them possible to achieve truthful representations about the past occurrences. The other is called 'constructivist' view asserting that memory is a dynamic system which can respond to stimulus of the recalling moment therefore change with respect to the expected needs. The function of remembering is to construct accurate representations at the time of recall and it does not matter whether the encoded content is preserved or not (Bernecker, 2017).

Comparable to this point, more recent works inquiring memory trace show that there is a remarkable constructive turn in philosophy of memory. For instance, Michaelian

(2011) argues that even the trace, which is supposed to provide a bridge between the past and the present, is also constructed itself. Thus, a memory trace cannot be expected to provide a truthful record of experience. Such an understanding of memory trace rejecting the idea that a representation needs to be true to be a memory seems to provide a more reasonable account allowing the possibility that there can be alterations in memory. Also, De Brigard (2014) asserts that memory as a particular process of a larger cognitive system that allows us to reconstitute various parts of traces.

It is important to note that memory is mainly divided into two subtypes which are episodic and semantic memory. The distinction between episodic and semantic memory is first made by Tulving (1972). In his influential theory of memory, he proposes that semantic memory is the capacity which enables us to recollect general information about the world. For instance, it is to remember that Paris is the capital city of France. On the other hand, episodic memory refers to the capacity in which we recollect occurrences from the past. More specifically, he defines episodic memory as “information about temporally dated episodes or events, and temporal-spatial relations among these events” (Tulving, 1972:385). To give an example, remembering a recent family trip to Paris. Considering the distinction between episodic and semantic memory, I need to signify that in the following sections where I frequently make mention of memory what I refer to is episodic memory.

Moreover, the constructive turn in philosophy of memory has led philosophers to think that a causal link between what the subject remembers and what happened in the past may not be necessary for remembering. Since, the difference between imagining the future and remembering the past is considered to be something negligible as they have a lot in common. There are number of neuropsychological studies supporting the parallel between them (see, e.g., Atance & O’Neill 2001; Addis et al. 2010). In this sense, episodic memory is considered as a form of mental time travel. For a subject to imagine himself in a hypothetical future event and re-experience a past event is tightly related (De Brigard, 2014). Such an understanding of remembering ignoring the link between what happened in the past and what the subject recalls at the present is a too strong claim that eliminates the distinction between imagination and memory. That is why I argue that rather than going to extremes, namely either archivalist or constructivist, we need a different start to

understand how memory is integrated into our everyday life. By doing this, we will be able to see that having a more moderate approach can possibly solve the difficulties that we have to face in two extremes.

### 1.1 Distorted memory and eyewitness testimony

There are many studies in experimental psychology that supports the constructivist view (see, e.g., Ross 1989; Loftus 1993; Conway & Pleydell-Pearce 2000). Here I will briefly mention only two influential ones. First one is a classic study of remembering that is related to why and how we remember. Bartlett (1932) argues that remembering is a dynamic process which is linked to personal interpretation and construction. Hence, memory can be determined by our cultural values, standards, learnings, and so on. In his study, participants read a story called “The War of the Ghosts” twice and after a while they tell the story to another person several times. Bartlett observed that people make many changes and omissions while telling the story. In one case, for instance, a participant replaced the word ‘canoe’ with ‘boat’ and ‘seal hunting’ with ‘fishing’ as it was a more familiar one for him. Moreover, even if some of the participants do not clearly understand what was going on in the story, they tried to rationalize it with respect to what could have been from their point of view. Bartlett concluded that memory is distorted in a number of ways (it becomes considerably shorter, some details are changed, some are lost and the structure also changes) because people inclined to alter the story to make it a more familiar or rational one.

Another famous study by Loftus & Palmer (1974) is designed to test how accuracy of eyewitness testimony can be affected by the language used. It is also an important study to see how memory is an active process that is subject to construction and personal interpretation. In the study, they report two experiments where participants watch films of traffic accidents and then answered leading questions. Changing a single word in the question has caused participants to construct their memory and respond in a dramatically different way. For instance, in the first experiment the question is about the speed of the cars taking part in the collision. Some participants were asked to estimate how fast the cars were going when they hit each other, while others received the same question with a different verb. Instead of ‘hit’, participants were questioned with the verbs contacted, collided, bumped, and smashed.

Depending on the verbs included in the interrogation, participants’ responses vary

even if they all watched the same films of traffic accidents. As a result, they elicit a strong interaction between memory and language. When the participants are faced with a stronger verb, they tend to remember the accident in a different way.

So far, I have looked at the archivalist and the constructivist views considering the relationship between truth and memory. Each tries to handle the issue in a very abstract way and figure out how memory is supposed to work without referring to any tangible act. However, I would like to turn the heat on a more concrete way of understanding memory since I am interested in how we make use of memory in real life and this is the point where social functions of memory come into play. Before embarking on my main argument, I need to make sure that the path going to it is clear enough so that there is no room for any confusion. Therefore, in the next chapter, I will try to handle the difficulty taking part in the relation between memory and truth.

## CHAPTER 2

### ACCURACY RATHER THAN TRUTH

Several arguments mentioned above demonstrate that the relationship between memory and truth is inevitable. Although constructive theory of memory supports the idea that memory is not a source to provide us with truthful representations of the past events, still we do not have to be archival view's supporters to reconcile memory with truth. Since, we are still in need of relying on our memories in various cases some of which necessitates a closer connection to truth and some do not. Hence, constructing a proper relationship allowing us to satisfy both truth demanding circumstances and others which are in need of leaving truth behind is required. For truth demanding cases, it could be to remember where you have parked your car, what you are going to buy at the grocery shop or which story of your life could be more affective to make people believe that you are a whatever you like kind of person and so on. In this respect, even if the contemporary studies support the constructive turn in memory theory, truth issue is not yet done with memory. If truth is an important feature of memory but at the same time it raises difficulties, then the need for having a different concept that is more moderate and proper to get along with memory needs to be met. My suggestion is that this could be assured through a renewed concept, accuracy, allowing us to both redefine what successful remembering is and embrace a larger area where different functions of memory could take part in.

Therefore, I would like to focus on how accuracy could help us to cope effectively with the problems we are faced with truth demanding theories of memory. Consider the following case so as to see the difference between accuracy and truth. Suppose someone says that "Tomorrow it is going to be a rainy day, so do not forget to take your umbrella with you". In order for this utterance to assert something meaningful and be true, it should be actually raining tomorrow, whereas it could be still accurate

even if it does not actually rain but it is a very cloudy, dark and moist day so that gives you a sense of rainy day. Or, consider the following case, “It is a rainy day and I am not going to do anything other than lying in my cozy bed” this could also be true if it truly rains and you do not really do anything other than lying whereas it could be accurate even though it does not actually rain but it is enough for you to believe that it is a rainy day as it is a dark, cloudy and moist day and watching Netflix and chilling does not count as doing anything for you. Since what you mean by doing anything is more like working on your PhD applications or doing the laundry and so on. It is obvious that two of the examples above are not, at least in the same way, truth requiring cases since we generally do not feel suspicious about whether it actually rains or the utterer exactly did nothing, etc. Still this is not very different in the case of memory because most of the time how we benefit from memory do not also postulate such truth sensitive circumstances. In this sense, accuracy provide us with more flexibility by allowing to say something is accurately the case even if it is not truthfully the case and when it comes to the social functions of memory this will definitely make more sense but before going into that I need to clarify accuracy in a more detailed way.

The tension between memory and truth takes its source mostly from how we characterize what successful remembering is supposed to be. Because memory is the only source that we can keep in touch with the past, it compels us to hold on to truth. However, accuracy gives us a chance to enlarge our conception of successful remembering so that we can both stick with truth and ignore it with respect to the expected needs. Here is an example to illustrate how it works in a real-life story. Olivia gets together with her high school friends to hang out and resurrect their traditional Friday night meeting. Not surprisingly, they talk about old school days and Olivia starts to tell the following story: on a Monday morning, she left her house to get on the school bus, but then realized she forgot her homework so returned to home to take it. Unfortunately, she missed the bus and had to walk up to school. Walking towards school, she encountered her friend Jenny who also missed the bus because she spent too much time to find matching socks. Therefore, she accompanied Olivia on her way to school. After a while, they saw their friend Blair who also missed the bus since she forgot to set up alarm and failed to wake up at the time she should be. That was a surprising coincidence that three of them somehow

missed the bus and had to walk up to school. The other friend, Serena who successfully caught the bus started to wonder what could have happened to her friends. After Olivia finishes the story, they discuss about the details which Olivia might get wrong. Jenny insists that she was not late because of matching socks but rather she could not find her blue sweater. Blair claims that she was not late because she forgot to set an alarm instead, she forgot to turn off silent mode and Serena remembers that it is true that she was wondering about her friends but it is not because she was alone in the school bus but rather her mother gave her a lift so that she also did not take the bus. Considering the story, it is hard to say that what Olivia remembers is a true memory since there are many details which are not so important but are effective in deciding whether it truthfully reflects the past. On the other hand, we can still say that what Olivia remembers is an accurate story because she remembers a day with a great coincidence in which she and two of her friends failed to catch the bus and had to go on foot. In this respect, even if it is not a truthful memory, it can be counted as an accurate one and Olivia's aim to tell this story is not about truthfully representing the past. Instead, for the sake of coming together ten years after growing up it is something more like an engaging story functioning as an ice breaker, that is why successful remembering cannot be bounded by truth. Good remembering involves our ability to remember what is important in the context of our recollections (Campbell, 2006). As long as the essence of the story is preserved, there is no need to go for a truthful memory to say that it is a successful memory. You might wonder how one could know what the essence is in each memory. By essence, I do not mean anything particular rather what I mean is a thing providing the rememberer to achieve his aim in retrieving a memory by adhering to accuracy.

A similar point comparing truth and accuracy in terms of emotions is put into account by Morton (2002). He makes an important point that even if a story is not true, it can remain to be accurate and that is why accuracy is much more valuable than truth. For instance, there is no way for a science fiction that is based on imagined ways of life to be true, but it can accurately represent what truly happened in actual world. After considering the examples given above, now we can clearly see why truth is a problematic concept for memory and accuracy is a more suitable one. In the following parts, I will consider different functions of memory which will also

support the idea that we need to rely on accuracy in order to meet expected needs of the present time and serve required functions.

## CHAPTER 3

### FUNCTIONS OF MEMORY

Functions of memory could be diversified depending on what your aim is in dealing with its different employments. In this paper, my target is to evaluate how memory is used in different instances of everyday life with a particular emphasis on how accuracy is adapted with respect to our motivation for relying on memory. For this purpose, I am going to analyze two functions of memory one of which is the directive functions where memory with high accuracy is demanded so as to serve the functions and the other is the social functions in which accuracy changes depending on the distinct requirements of the given functions. In order to illustrate the variability of accuracy in the social functions, I am going to offer several cases that are generated by everyday life events. Moreover, it is important to note that there could be other functions of memory, but this division captures most of them.

#### 3.1 Directive Functions of Memory

Let me begin by instances where accuracy is crucial in order to fulfill the expected functions. One of the greatest advantages of remembering is, no doubt, learning from past in that, we gain some experiences and later they become directive to our future actions. Hence, directive functions of memory are a good starting point which, most of the time, looks for highly accurate representations of the past. Without having an accurate memory that would be really difficult or even painful as you might keep making the same mistakes several times. Therefore, accuracy seems to be decisive in succeeding in these kinds of tasks. When we encounter with a problem, it might be useful to recall past experiences that could provide a specific experience in which a comparable trouble was confronted (Williams, Conway & Cohen, 2008). To give an example, you are about to get involved in a social group that you are not very familiar with. As an outsider, you do not feel comfortable since you are afraid that you can do something inappropriate or rude and make a bad first impression. In such

cases, it could be useful to search back through autobiographical memory and find a similar experience that can provide suitable instances from your life. It could be to remember why you really impressed or annoyed by a person who was an outsider to your social group. Therefore, you have to remember some accurate experience that a comparable situation has occurred.

In the previous example, where you are an outsider who is about to get involved in a social group, it does not have to be the case that you are directly aware that what you rely on is one of your memories helping you to decide how you should act in the group which you are not very familiar. Instead, it might appear as if it is just an image of the person who did a good impression on you so that you act in a way which resembles to the person you remember. This shows that how memories are peculiar in the sense that even the person who is affected by his own memory is not aware that it is actually a memory. When we recollect, we are encouraged by some goals, desires or even unconscious operations. Such motivations might affect memories to seem like ideas, images and emotions. Therefore, we may not recognize whether it is a memory which has influence upon what we do or it is an idea, an image or an emotion directing us to act in a certain way.

Going back to the previous example, remembering what the person who you find impressive at first glance was wearing, how he introduced himself, whether he was remarkably good-humored, sincere or friendly, the way he shook your hand, how much attention he gave to your words, and such similar details need to be carefully considered in deciding how you are going to behave when you introduce yourself to the new social group. Since, it is a comparable situation that you can take as an example or as a directive. In such cases where we draw lessons from past and behave accordingly, in order to meet our expectation from memory, in other saying serve the directive functions, high accuracy is of great importance.

### 3.2 Social Functions of Memory

Memory takes over a key role in coping with our social life and that is why we need to put so much emphasis on the social functions of memory. By saying social functions what I mean is that how memory is used in managing, facilitating and shaping our social lives. Here, the question to be asked is that ‘what purpose do we have in narrating or just recalling a particular event?’ and answers to this question

can guide us to see the relationship between different levels of accuracy and memory serving what is expected by social functions. Moreover, social functions of memory are complex and intrapersonal – interpersonal dyad. In this sense, it does not have to be the case that we always put memories into words so as to take advantage of it. Memory can be both private and social in that it is possible to cherish our personal memories as well as share them with others (Nelson, 1993). We can also make use of memory intra-personally which in the end affects the way how we interpersonally communicate. Examples in the subsequent sections will be given about this.

Memory is mostly attached to its social functions where we narrate our memories to make connection with others. In this respect, it is absurd to argue that what we narrate is only to transpose the experienced past. Since, social functions may lead us to make alterations in memory with respect to the present stimulus. For instance, one may choose to skip some of the details while narrating or even changes some parts of his memory because he might believe that it could be inappropriate, irrelevant or more sensible to talk about therefore, he just skips and alters some. Here, one might think that what he does is intentionally modifying the parts which he actually remembers and does not want to share. If so, it is not because there is an alteration in his memory instead, rather he deliberately tries to alter it. However, this does not mean that the parts which he decided to narrate cannot be considered as memory too. Namely, his attempt to reconstruct what has been already reconstructed by memory trace does not cause the double constructed representation not to be a memory. Constructivist view allows including changes and distortions in providing accurate representations of the past. The idea that memory should represent what truly happened in the past as in the case of archival view looks alike the process of clipping a bird's wings so that it cannot fly away and makes us strictly limited in defining which of these representations we have about the past can be regarded as the instances of memory and which are not. Thus, such an understanding does not let us consider many representations of the past as memory. We can think of a very old memory, for instance your unforgettable 8 years old birthday party. It might be more difficult to remember in details than your unforgettable 30 years old birthday. You may not remember exactly what the dress you were wearing looked like but maybe you still remember how pretty you felt in your dress so that it is accurate to say something like “My mom sewed me a very beautiful dress”. Or you can even claim

that it was a really beautiful pink dress, even though you are not sure about what color your dress was but you know that pink was your favorite color when you were a child and it is more likely to be pink than any other color. In this sense, even if one deliberately tries to manipulate his memory just because she thinks it is better or even sensible to have it in that way, there seems to be no harm. Since, what matters is to understand the motivations which the rememberer is triggered by. As I mentioned before, as long as the essence of a memory is preserved, we can still consider such cases as instances of successful remembering. That is why we need to enlarge our conception of memory, in other words, conception of what good or successful remembering is supposed to be, so that we can realize how social functions come into play.

When one remembers, the representation is created at the time of recall and memory trace is the facility making the representation possible and is affected by some certain cue as well as surrounding situations that the rememberer passes through (Robins, 2012). It is to say that remembering is constructive in that it generates an accurate representation of the past responding to the present stimulus. Social functions of memory is a place in which surrounding situations are extremely affective in the process of remembering therefore we need to be aware that what motivations the rememberer maintains when he is stimulated to recall a particular memory. In chapter 2, I have explained the difference between truth and accuracy. With this distinction, I want to focus on how accuracy can change according to what is required in memory. Since, level of accuracy varies with respect to the given details and here I do not mean superfluous details which do not contribute anything useful to the constitution of the memory. Rather, the details that have significant effect in generating what you recollect. In the example, where high school friends come together and talk about a joint memory, the core of the narration is not whether Jenny's sweater was blue or not. Contra, it signifies an unusual encounter that all of them, one way or another, failed to catch the school bus. However, including even detailed redundant constituents would make no harm to the memory. It would either strengthen or weaken accuracy with respect to how it affects the rememberer in coming closer to or moving away from the essence of his memory. Hence, in generating a memory accuracy can change depending on the details and what

actually matters is how accuracy responsive to functions that in many cases it needs to be sacrificed in order to accomplish the intended social functions.

Let's consider an instance of making a friend. It is a case in which you basically start from a scratch. The person who you would like to be a friend knows nothing about you. Therefore, it is a chance for you to create a new profile which includes whatever features you would like to share with. Memories, in this case, can be used as windows and you basically try to give that person access to what your life has been so far. Helping you to develop a deeper quality of connection. Depending on how you feel about the person who you want to link up with, you can be highly accurate to show who you really are. Conversely, you may want to build a wall against that person so that he cannot see what is accurately going on behind the wall. Hence, accuracy is in line with the function and is variable and responsive in connection with our expectations from sharing memory.

In the former case, we see that memory is used interpersonally. In addition to this, we can take advantage of memory in intrapersonal way which may have a great influence on our interpersonal relationships. In our social circle, we keep information about individuals to cope efficiently. For almost every person in our life, we keep some memory reminding us how to behave to one particular person or a group of individuals. Remembering the fears and insecurities that a person goes through directs you to be careful about the sharing. To give an example, if your friend was abandoned at the age of 7 by her parents, you may hesitate to delve deeper into her parents' side of the story. It does not have to be the case that the reason why you rely on your memory is because you want to come up with a positive attitude, you may also utilize it for some malevolent influences on people. This may sound like an information you have about her instead of a memory, but memories may appear in different forms in that we cannot always differentiate whether it is just a feeling, an image, or something else and here I do not mean a kind of general knowledge about individuals in our life. Therefore, it is not something like I remember my friend told me that she gets mad when someone makes fun of her height. Instead, it refers to the cases where you remember a particular event occurring between you. For instance, you can remember how a teenage trouble maker caused your friend to be upset when he made cruel jokes about short people. Also, having a highly accurate representation of the past serves better in your goal-directed recalling as it would increase the

likelihood of having a much more convenient attitude. As a result, shared history between you and others are considerably effective in the sense that we like to rely on memories of people involved in our life in order to adjust different policies in managing our relationships.

## CHAPTER 4

### MEMORY PATHWAYS

Before I start to examine the particular cases in which accuracy might differ regarding the motivation of a rememberer, I would like to make mention of a figurative expression that sets a good example of how memory system in the process of retrieving works and the rememberer manages this process. Helstrup, De Beni, Cornoldi, and Koriat (2007) use a pathway metaphor so as to illustrate how recalling occurs and I believe, it is going to be very helpful in understanding the different aspects of memory especially with a particular emphasis on the social functions. Since, it aims to clearly define particular places in which different features of memory take place. Basically, the pathway metaphor is to say that when someone remembers something, he is like standing at the crossroad between two routes. One of them goes to memory and the other comes from memory. To recall a memory is like having a mental trip throughout two routes and the rememberer is thought to be standing at the crossroads in which routes going to and coming from one's memory system intersect.

The route going to memory is described as leading the rememberer to his own memory system. Here, we can think of memory system as a library including various books of your own and when you look for a particular one, you need to search for it. Here, it is important to note that library example stands for including one's personal books in that they are not composed of frozen snapshots taken on his past experiences, instead it is more like diaries of events he has written during his life. In such a library, you may need a definition particularizing what you are searching for like using a call number to find a book. On the other hand, pathway metaphor also indicates that it is also possible that the rememberer accidentally detects a book without having a deliberate plan to reach it. It is like coming across with a book corresponding to your interest just by chance even though you were not actually looking for it. This distinction between actively looking for a specific book and

coming up with a book while glancing over the bookshelves are associated with voluntary and involuntary memories. In voluntary memories case, you actively search for it therefore, it is a result of a systematical, voluntary exploring. For instance, you might have a keyword, a definition, a call number or whatsoever to get the right book. On the other hand, involuntary memories are more sudden and passive in that one does not come up with a book because he was actively looking for it.

The route coming from memory stands for using the retrieved memory for different reasons. It can be likened to fetching and bringing back some of the books you got from the library. Helstrup, et al. (2007) argue that one can make use of the retrieved memory privately as well as publicly. Just like you can read that book for your own as well as for narrating others. At the beginning, I signified that books in your library can be likened to diaries including records of your various events and experiences. Furthermore, we can associate this diary case with private/public affair as well. Keeping a diary is something private or even secret therefore you do not write it in apprehension of to be read by others. Memories are very much alike because we do not always remember things for the purpose of telling it others. However, if the rememberer wants to make it public and narrate it to others, then he is the one who can manage what to share or hide. In addition to voluntary and involuntary distinction, they also associate two routes with editing and not editing. Editing process of memory takes place in utilizing one's memories. Here, the reason why you call on a memory can be crucial for editing. One basically goes over his memory to edit before making use of it whereas unedited memories are generally used in the same way one has it in his mind.

Having this general description in mind, we can look into the crucial part where they articulate the connection taking place between voluntary versus in voluntary and edited versus not edited memories. They argue that voluntary memories are generally edited with respect to the expected needs of the rememberer. Since, they are deliberate and on purpose the rememberer tends to be more selective and careful while using them whereas involuntary memories are mostly non-edited because they pop up suddenly in one's mind so that he does not have an intention to retrieve it which in the end makes them closer to the initial occurrence. Of course, this claim is not to say that it is always true in every single case of remembering and they allow

the possibility that there could be exceptions where voluntary memories are not edited as well as involuntary memories are edited. However, their claim remains to be true in most of the cases and I believe it provides a valuable interpretation of how memory works and why we remember for the benefit of my argument.

Here is the table they use to show how four possible combinations of pathways take place:

*Table 13.1* Combinations of pathways to and from memory (Helstrup, De Beni, Cornoldi, & Koriat, 2007:307)

|                      | Pathways to memory |           |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Pathways from memory | Involuntary        | Voluntary |
| Non-edited           | A                  | B         |
| Edited               | C                  | D         |

Category A stands for automatic, involuntary and mostly intrapersonal memories. Suppose that you suddenly start to think about one of your past experiences which is triggered by some flash signals that you did not intentionally look for. In such cases, it is very likely to recall without alterations. Since, it is like to be caught unprepared or you are undefended. On the other hand, category C represents the cases where one narrates his involuntary memories. That is why they are more likely to be controlled and edited by the rememberer. Category D includes everyday memory where narration occurs because of a stimulus and it is achieved through a specific pathfinder for instance, it can be a question about what you most regret in your life or what your favorite holiday was, etc. Therefore, you systematically search for the relevant piece of experience.

Making subsequent amendments can also change the way how you remember the original past, even if it has edited while narrating to others. Here, by saying original I do not mean anything truthfully representing the past occurrence. I mean the representation which comes to the rememberer's mind without any intentional alteration. Let me go back to the library example which I used to describe one's memory system and voluntary/involuntary retrievals. One goes around voluntarily or not (mostly voluntarily), and finds a book. Further suppose, he picks up some book and takes some notes on the book and highlights some chapters or doodling

something on it while he is reading it and then he puts it back. When it is time to get and reuse, he sees his notes basically and it may affect the way how he remembers/reads the original text since there are some alterations, additions on it. For instance, the highlighted parts may take his attention so much that he does not even pay attention to parts.

There could be cases where separation of these categories is not very apparent. Namely, some cases of remembering may switch from one category to another. Suppose that one feels confused about his choices giving direction to his life and starts to consider previous experiences he had before in order to understand what is exactly proper for him. In this case, being as accurate as possible and not doing editing while considering your previous experiences could be a better way to make the right choice. However, one may want to manipulate the past representations to his advantage. To give a daily life example, sometimes being a master student in philosophy department can be very annoying and he keeps asking Is this really what I want? In such cases he can go back to his personal history to understand what is best or proper for himself and depending on what he wants to believe or how he wants to manipulate himself, he might choose to edit his memories to get rid of his current pain. Even though he was not happier when working for a company instead of doing a master he can focus on the parts which are intentionally highlighted and made him happy in those days. However, when it comes to tell why he started to think in this way to someone, may be a best friend or a parent, who knows him very well, he may avoid sharing his modified memories because he believes that the person can recognize that he is trying to find a way to escape his current struggles. Therefore, it is also very important to consider the audience who you recount your memory.

## CHAPTER 5

### CASES STUDIES

Up to this point, I have explained the ground that why having a narrow understanding of memory causes us to exclude the very vital functions of it in which we take advantage of memory in a concrete way. Having a renewed look without blinkers, therefore, will help us to grasp its everyday life practices. In the following sections, I am going to provide daily life cases demonstrating the shifting characteristic of accuracy which gives rise to fulfill an intended function that composes the social functions of memory in the broad framework. I am going to respectively look into forgiving, promising, reminiscing, empathy and partner relationships cases.

#### 5.1 Forgiving

In this part, I am going to focus on the issue in which people are motivated to manipulate their own memories to fulfill the given function that is forgiving and how it works in the social context where accuracy is an important concept. If forgiving is to be roughly defined, it can be described as a deliberate action to stop feeling of offense toward a person or a group of people who, you believe, has hurt or offended you. In this sense, it has a great impact on maintaining the relationship between you and the others. The effectiveness of your memory when forgiving is our concern has a lot to offer. If we keep remembering the issue annoying us, then what the point is in saying I forgive whatsoever happened. In some cases, for instance, we may come up with people saying “I tried hard but I cannot forgive him for what he did to me”.

Here, the subject fails to overcome his memory and he cannot ignore it thus it prevents him to establish a different relationship. Or, if we actually do not remember the issue then it would not be forgiving, instead it would be forgetting and again this does not make sense in terms of forgiving. Since, forgiving is something we voluntarily perform whereas forgetting is an involuntary action. To a degree, we

have to remember the problem occurring between the person we forgive and us and moreover, we should decide to not pay attention to what has happened. Namely, one should still be aware of the past and he definitely keeps remembering, yet he wants to be untied and liberated from the past to maintain a different relation with the person(s) he has forgiven.

Forgiving seems to demand us to perform two conflicting actions at the same time in that we need to both stick to the past so that forgiving makes sense and liberated from the past to make sure that it is not a problem anymore. Accuracy might be a turning point in your desire to forgive. Accuracy needs to be reduced to make sure that your attempt to forgive someone could succeed. Having a lower accurate memory, therefore, can be helpful in working to overcome past wrongdoings. In other saying, having a healed memory that is not erased or forgotten may give you a chance to have a new way of remembering which does not bother you anymore but remains to be there to make forgiving possible.

Here, one might argue that even if I totally remember what exactly happened with the person who has offended me, it is still possible to forgive him without making any alterations in my memory. However, there is an odd situation here that if you completely remember the issue between you and the offender and you claim that I forgive him even though I remember the issue with all the details then it is absurd to claim why you were offended in the first place. This could be the case only when a person who was offended in the past changes his mind or he matures through a sequence of events or something happens which shows him it was not a problem so that he can accept that it was not a big deal and he was over-sensitive and touchy. But, even in this case, forgiving seems to lose its meaning because in order to forgive you must be feeling annoyed at the present as well so that you want to get rid of this feeling of offense and try to forgive.

## 5.2 Promising

Looking at the other side of the coin, we are faced with an opposed feature of memory that is promising and again is highly connected to the social functions. Just like taking place in the forgiving case, it is interesting to see how the subject of a memory could manipulate his own representation of the past in order to maintain a social bond. If forgiving is being released from the burden of the past so that the

subject becomes intentionally unbound by his own past, then promising seems to be the reverse of forgiving because this time it a desire or a choice to be bound by the subject's own word (Ricoeur, 2004).

The motivation behind forgiving and promising is attached to social functions of memory. Either you succeed or not, in both cases your attempt to control your own memory is directed to an interpersonal relationship. Promising is to be tied by the subject's own word and even though forgiving is to try to be oblivious to the past and promising is to take cognizance of the past, both efforts aim to achieve a social goal. These concepts, forgiving and promising, may lead us to have further questions like why a promise should be kept or why it is important to forgive someone to keep going in a relationship. Definitely, these are worth questioning, however my aim is to understand what motivations we have to rely on memories in the social context and its relation to accuracy which seems to be very flexible in the sense that it allows us to alter and manipulate memories to respond our goals. That is why I have to leave such moral, psychological concerns aside to prevent becoming distant from my main inquiry.

In promising case, we have a duty to remember if we care about the ones who we make a promise. Here, keeping a promise needs to be considered as an important thing in a relationship therefore I suppose that people care about keeping a promise and if not, they become upset, offended, disappointed or something that is not pleasant. Our past, in this respect, puts pressure on us to keep remembering what has been said and behave accordingly. The following utterance, for instance, "You have my word!" makes sense if we care about keeping promises. When someone gives a promise, it can appear in different types in his consideration. It can be a strong one affecting your daily activity so much that you may need to try hard to stick to it or it can be a trivial one which makes you remember when you encounter a situation pushing you to remember your word. In each case, memory with high accuracy is crucial because it does not matter how often you should keep remembering to be bound. For instance, if you promise to give up smoking then from the moment you make it, you should remind yourself not to smoke as your desire to smoke triggers you very often. On the other hand, if you promise to call your grandmother on holidays it is not something that you should remember every day. However, when it is time to remember what you have promised for, you need to be again highly

accurate in the sense that the reason that makes you do an action or not do it is clearly there to stimulate you. Moreover, you may also need to remember not only your word but also other things which caused you to give that promise or what would happen if you keep it or break it in considering the relationship between the person who you have given your word and you. In smoking example, why you ended up with giving such a promise could be because you are at risk of heart attack and your beloved wants you to give a promise to quit it. If that is the case, you also consider how she would be affected by your attitude. The best way of doing it is to consider the previous cases in your relationship or the possible responses she might give and the directive functions of memory come into play and it helps you better to meet your need with a high accuracy as well. That is why the more accuracy you have in your memory, the better you will benefit in such circumstances.

Putting these together, forgiving and promising cases demonstrate that we do try to modify (modifying here does not only mean that we change it, it also means that our effort to bring it with a high accuracy) our memories not only in the exchange of information that will take part in the following section but also the information (or memory) we keep for ourselves.

### 5.3 Reminiscing

Considering the social functions of memory, reminiscing can be seen as the most prominent feature where inter-personal relationships take advantage. “Sharing memories provides material for conversation and therefore facilitates social interaction, and people become friends by exchanging personal narratives” (Williams, Conway & Cohen, 2008:24). Memory provides useful material for us to establish and maintain social bonds. We feel closer to people when we have similar stories that occurred in our life period. By the same token, it would be the case that we like people because their stories are different than ours so that we find them much more appealing than usual ones. It is a way to show that you are close, similar, or so on. Also, a way to show that you are different, extraordinary and even fascinating.

However, one may not want to share his memory as it is exactly on his mind, even himself might get confused about what exactly happened, he may feel insecure, suspicious in telling all the details he recalls or his current position may influence him to recall things in a different way. At this point, it is important to ask the

following questions: how important is it that memories we would like to share overlap exactly with the experienced past? Or do we really want to share our memories which perfectly (let's suppose they are perfectly remembered) reflect the truth with others? What I am trying to point out is that even though exchanging personal narratives is helpful and even crucial for social interaction, this does not necessitate that the speaker is supposed to tell his memories manifestly and in line with the truth. In such cases, memory is used to fulfill some desired function and hence there is no need for a further inquiry which looks for whether memories uttered have the form of "S remembers that p and p, in fact, is the case". Contra, they can take the form of "S remembers that p and S wants to tell he remembers that p^".

Interpersonal relationships are complicated in the sense that there are many dynamics holding people together. Therefore, in order to understand how memory which supposed to enrich, strengthen social bonding takes part in reminiscing, we need to be aware what the narrator's strategies are during social interactions. Accuracy, in this sense, is a variable factor helping the narrator to achieve his goal, therefore it depends on what you want to do by sharing. Here is an example to illustrate what I mean; Charlie, the subject, recalls a past experience 'his first day of collage' in order to encourage his little daughter who will attend university soon and is afraid of being away from her family and friends. Charlie's memory includes the following components: a baby cat, a red corvette, the song "Little Red Corvette" by American musician Prince, smell of breakfast and his lucky blanket made by his grandmother. The real story goes as follow: Beginning the day, he wakes up and realizes how much he misses his family. Even if he did not pay attention to the blanket, it was the reason why he started to feel in that way. As I mentioned earlier, memories are peculiar in the sense that we sometimes fail to distinguish whether it is a feeling and image or something else besides a memory. Being away from home is a difficult experience for him. While having his breakfast, he noticed that it is the very same smell of his breakfast in which he used to have on Sundays with his family. Walking towards the school, he encounters with a little kitten which looks like his cat when it was a baby. This happenstance also makes him dreadfully homesick. Then, the better part of the story begins; he sees his dream car, a red corvette, waiting at traffic lights. He gets really excited because it is the first time, he has ever seen a real red corvette. Thereafter, he goes into a shop to get coffee and notices the song "Little Red

Corvette” is playing. This coincidence makes his day and he notices that even though he is away from his beloved family and friends, it is a great day to give his new life a chance. The story has a miserable beginning but, in the end, it has a valuable lesson which could be helpful especially for his little daughter who is afraid to be unhappy in her new life. While telling the story, he makes some editing with respect to the information he has about his daughter. No doubt, it is a voluntary memory that he strategically searches for and hence it is very likely to be edited. He does not mention about the blanket which causes him to begin his day feeling alienated because her grandmother has passed away and they never had a good relationship. Therefore, he avoids offending her. Moreover, he knows that she is afraid of animals because of a bad experience she had when she was a kid therefore, she does not know what it means to build a bond with an animal. That is why Charlie thinks that she cannot understand how a cat could make him heartsick. Taking this into consideration, he alters his memory and replaces the cat with his younger brother to make it clear for his daughter. Finally, he is worried about the song ‘Little Red Corvette’ because it narrates a one-night stand with using the car as a metaphor to picture his lover’s wanton ways. He, as a father, hesitates to mention that song, he does not want to make her curious about the song and cause her to do a research about it. Since, he believes that it may not be appropriate for a girl at her age. Thus, he substitutes the song “Little Red Rodeo” for “Little Red Corvette” and also his dream car Isuzu Rodeo for Chevrolet Corvette. The example shows that people come up with different motivations in narrating a memory. If the listener was different, not Charlie’s daughter but one of his friends from collage he may not need to be as careful as he was while telling it to his daughter. Accuracy, therefore, needs to be responsive to the function in accordance with the narrator’s goal of sharing a memory. Charlie’s aim is to show that it is going to be a new chapter of her life and being stuck in the past would cause her to miss the present moment that might generate beautiful future memories.

We like to reminisce about past experiences, we enjoy sharing our stories and listening others’. It is definitely a good way of enriching communication. However, it is important to notice that, while making alterations with respect to the listener’s situation, edited memory must include logical, coherent and suitable changes so that the narrator does not lose his interest. While memories are shared with others,

information exchange has to be reliable because listeners look for beneficial and trustworthy signals provided by a narrator, otherwise they lose their interest (Mahr&Csibra, 2018). It is reasonable to argue that if a listener believes that speaker's information is not reliable therefore does not provide him with useful information, he would stop taking heed of what he listens. Then, social functions turn out to be useless or even impossible in the case where it believed not to be true. Also, this is the same for a narrator if he realizes that he cannot influence the listener's mental state then there is no point to exchange memory. In this sense, even though there is alteration in one's memory, it is crucial for a narrator to stay coherent so that engaging in memory share makes sense for both parties. We have seen that accuracy is a much more convenient concept when memory is under consideration. It is open to distortions, alterations and even manipulations regarding to one's motivation and surrounding situations. However, these are not the factors that hinder the rememberer from being effective in sharing memories. Namely, what he narrates remains to be something valuable and he can be an even more influential narrator with the tactful use of memory. Then, reliability in this context does not necessarily entail sharing only truthful memories. Since, reliability could be ensured if engaging in memory exchange serves effectively to satisfy function.

In this respect, what matters in memory exchange is the effectiveness of memory that is required for influencing listeners' mental states. Neisser (1966) touches upon a similar point concerning how some other aspects could be more significant in remembering as a kind of action and he claims that "The aim in telling a joke, for example, is to tell it effectively; whether you tell it just as you heard it is of no consequence at all" (p.204). Similarly, what is decisive in memory exchange is more about the effectiveness instead of being in correspondence with truth.

#### 5.4 Empathy

Empathy seems to be an important activity proving people with a better way of understanding each other and several valuable qualities such as respectfulness, compassion, discernment, generosity. There could be different ways to empathize with others. One way of doing it might be to cognitively force yourself for understanding a situation that you are not familiar. For instance, it could be to try to understand how it is like to be a graduate student who desperately deals with PhD applications from the point of a professor. He might try to remember how difficult

and stressful to live through all this process when he was a candidate. Or, you may try to get to know the person you want to empathize with so that you become familiarized with him and it becomes easier for you to make connection to what he deals with from his perspective and so on. These can be definitely diversified and of course such an inquiry demands a much deeper level of discussion. However, I need to stay focused on my main concern which is, in this context, the efficiency of memory and its relation to accuracy when empathy is under consideration. Therefore, I take it for granted that it has a crucial impact in our social relationships.

Then, the question is that how it can be related to one's memory in the sense that how relying on one of your similar experiences occurred in the past can help you to empathize with a person and figure out what it is like to be that particular person who you want to relate with. Relying on your memories also seems to be a good way of doing it. Since, looking for a similar occurrence causing you to experience something that is close to what the person you want to relate is living through is a convenient alternative for empathy. This is not very different from how we make use of memory in the directive functions because in both cases, we look for a comparable situation that can be utilized to conduct us. In this sense, we may look for comparable memories helping us to know how he might feel, what kind of situation he is in, etc. Then, we can find ourselves in a position to say things like 'I am so sorry, I can definitely relate what you are struggling with'. Here, it is used as a way of expressing commiseration. On the other hand, it might be the case that you fail to empathize because it is a situation that is beyond your ability to comprehend, thus you may not be in a position to grasp so that say things like 'I cannot relate, I have never felt this way'. Therefore, searching through a memory that would possibly help in a given situation is carried out with some goals in mind which are again in connection with the social functions.

When it comes to the accuracy, it might be thought to be in the same manner as the directive functions. Since, you might think that memory with a high accuracy would serve better if you are looking for a similar situation for perspective taking. However, there seems to be a different demand here. When one retrieves a highly accurate memory, then it might cause him to fail in his attempt to understand what the person he tries to empathize with is passing through. Since, remembering an event in a detailed way may be evocative of the past feelings, thoughts so that he might

associate his own situation with the other person's. Yet, his aim is to grasp what it is like to be someone else and his own past could be confusing and distractor. In other words, it is like getting lost in your own past while you are trying to put yourself in somebody's shoes. We can think of romantic relationships as an example. Even if such relationships may have a lot in common, still they are all unique and different. That is why, when you want to empathize with someone who has broken up with his girlfriend, it may not be a good idea to get stuck firmly in how you felt in the face of such a situation. Hence, having a moderately accurate memory would work better as it is not one and the same thing with regard to empathy. In this respect, a moderate memory helping you to figure out an issue with general aspects outperforms a memory with a high accuracy so as to fulfill the function.

### 5.5 Partner Relationships

There could be different reasons why the rememberer needs to make alterations on his memory. This could be a consequence of his motivation, aim, reason to recall that particular memory just like in the case of forgiving, empathy, reminiscing etc. In other words, the reason why he retrieves a memory and the environmental constituents surrounding him are the leading elements for making changes on it. In addition to such elements, there could be other motives which are influential in judging the past with different standpoints. In this section, I am going to take romantic relationships into consideration which provides good instances of how partners make changes the way of looking at the past with respect to their present motivations and states that they are in at the moment.

Having a romantic relationship opens the possibility for getting hurt, offended and feeling upset because of one of the partners taking part in the relationship. It is inevitable that partners in close relationships ultimately perform some harmful behaviors (Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik & Lipkus, 1991). I am not claiming that it is the very nature of every romantic relationship but there is a seemingly a high possibility that transgressions are very likely to be happen in a close relationship. Despite the high likelihood that partners do something which causes to hurt each other, they do somehow find a way to maintain their relationship in that they do not always come up with saying things like "I am done, and it is over between us". How is it possible? I mean, it is obvious that people need to try hard to keep going on when such destructive acts happen and for sure, there might be several

ways to inhibit undesired outcomes of past transgressions and fix wrongdoings. Since my argument focuses on how different levels of accuracy can lead us to change the way how we retrieve a memory so that we can succeed in a desired function, in this context I am going to consider whether some other elements can affect the way we readjust the past.

Forgiving, for instance, is the case in which the rememberer wants to perform so as to maintain a different relationship by healing his memory therefore he needs to abandon accuracy to perform the function. The following study conducted by Luchies, Wieselquist, Rusbult, Kumashiro, Eastwick, Coolsen & Finkel (2013), on the other hand, demonstrates a different direction showing how some other impacts, besides the function which the rememberer holds might have a strong influence on the way how he retrieves a memory and it is important to see how memories are affected by the conditions we are in or the positions we are located. In the study, for instance, it is a strong belief in the reliability of a person, affecting persons' ability to control their memories. It basically suggests that in romantic relationships the more you trust to the person you are in a romantic relationship, the more optimistically you tend to recall the intensity, amount and consequential damages of the partner's past wrongdoings. If this is the case, then it is not only how you want to perceive the past but also how you feel in the present while reconsidering the past. We can think of misunderstandings as an example. Suppose that your partner made a mistake which troubles you for some reason. You are disappointed and you feel angry because of his wrongdoing. This may cause you to reconsider your previous problems just like in the directive functions, you may look for comparable situations in order to understand whether the issue has a background or there were some clues that might be warning you of the wrongdoing in question, etc. In doing so, your current position is extremely determinative that you might become so pessimistic that even though it is not a big problem for you it may seem to be unsolvable because of your present sight, feelings and thoughts. Further suppose that it turns out to be a misunderstanding and what your partner did is actually something for the benefit of your relationship and you realize that your anger has no target anymore. If this is the case then your attempt to reconsider past troubles between you and your partner might become meaningless or the way you look at them can take a different direction.

Luchies, et al. (2013) touch upon a dilemma that romantic partners continuously come across during their relationship. Dilemma consists of two contradictory purposes in a romantic relationship: self-protection and relationship promotion. In the former, partners tend to build and sustain a satisfying relationship through becoming closer and dependent on their partners. In the latter, they do the opposite in order to protect themselves from being hurt. In the light of this dilemma, they make a parallel assertion in the following way:

People with relatively strong trust in their partner are more likely to be able to afford the luxury of reinterpreting past partner transgressions in a relatively benign light, whereas those with relatively weak trust are less likely to afford this luxury and, instead, may reinterpret past partner transgressions in a relatively malign light (Luchies, et al. 2013:2).

Therefore, we see that trusting your partner gives you the ability to manipulate memories in order to cope with your relationship.

#### 5.6 Memory in Social Context

All these everyday life instances where rememberers take advantage of memory in order to satisfy targeted functions indicate clearly that remembering cannot be considered as a passive instrument providing us with truthful representations of the past occurrences. Since, truth is a concept that is beyond the power of memory especially in considering the social functions and consequently, expecting to achieve truth when we retrieve memories seems to be an effort in vain. It is not to say that as long as the function is served there is no need to look for a correspondence between the past happenings and the present recalling. Obviously, when we claim that we remember something, we do not make mention of imaginary formations which has no linkage to experienced events. However, it is also undeniable that our connection to the past is provided by a dynamic, unstable and responsive construction process in that truth becomes an over demanding concept for memory. Accuracy, in this sense, comes up with a solution that it can both satisfy the cases where we need to stick to the past in a much stronger way and get away from the past and so accuracy makes it possible for memory to welcome its functions with different demands.

Examination of memory in social context has shown that flexibility of accuracy that is necessary for succeeding in various functions of memory is inevitable. In the light of the foregoing considerations, I have shown different real-life instances including

forgiving, promising, reminiscing, empathy and partner relationships illustrating the distinct expectations of the functions of memory. To summarize briefly, forgiving demonstrates a case where a rememberer must sacrifice accuracy while reconstituting the past, whereas promising demands just the opposite. Reminiscing and empathy point out situations that memories are expected to be moderately accurate and finally, partner relationships indicate how people might be affected by their beliefs while taking the past into their consideration.

The past, unlike the future, is set and solid meaning that we cannot go back in time and change what happened there. Conversely, future is determined by the actions which we take in the present moment. For example, if you have to choose between leaving or staying each will open up the possibility that there will be probable futures depending on the action you decide to take in the present. Similarly, the way we look at the past is not set in that it is open to changes in line with our attitudes at the present. If that is the case, then even though we cannot make actual changes in our past, we are still able to vary the ways in which we retrieve our past which in the end, seems to change the past.

## CONCLUSION

We are obsessed with our past and memory is the only resource that we can keep connected to the past that is no longer available. We enjoy getting involved in others' stories as much as sharing ours. In this thesis, I have focused on the functions of memory with a particular emphasis on the social functions where memory is used in different instances of everyday life. In doing so, my aim is to show that memory cannot be expected to offer a truthful representation of the past since it is beyond memory's ability to achieve. Therefore, what we need to look for in our memories providing the correspondence between what happened in the past and what we recall at the moment is accuracy rather than truth. Accuracy, in this respect, gives us an opportunity to embrace different functions of memory exclusively taking place in the social context. To support this idea, I have demonstrated several real-life instances where accuracy is shifting in order to fulfill a rememberer's desired function.

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