

## AUTHORING MEMORY in ELLA HICKSON'S *THE AUTHORISED KATE BANE*<sup>1</sup>

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*Makale İlk Gönderim Tarihi / Recieved (First): 06.03.2020*

*Makale Kabul Tarihi / Accepted: 12.06.2020*

### Abstract

The truthfulness of the memory is a dubious matter because the recollection is a representation of the origin. Memory has a narrative structure in organising the remembrances, and with its relation to time and personal experience, is a basic block of selfhood. The organised stories of a personal history of deeds, ideas, aspirations and emotions marking out the way for the perception and interpretation of life are what create the selfhood. The play *The Authorised Kate Bane* poses authenticity as a problem concerning the human mind's capability to (re)construct memories in a narrative pattern and its share in selfhood building. The play questions the credibility of the human mind and self in conveying the past. The rememberer has the authority and competency of an author to narrate, presenting the factual stories blended with manipulated facts. In this vein, this study discusses Hickson's play in the context of re/constructible memory and self-construal claiming that the rememberer has an authorial capacity to rewrite the past and re/build the self anew. This study aims to discuss the play within the scope of studies on memory processes and self-construal adopting content analysis method and synthesising the findings with the data collected through literature review.

**Keywords:** Ella Hickson, *The Authorised Kate Bane*, Memory, Authenticity, Selfhood.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is the extended version of the author's oral abstract presentation titled "The Re/constructible Memory in Ella Hickson's *The Authorised Kate Bane*" delivered at the 5th International BAKEA Symposium at Sivas Cumhuriyet University on October 4-6, 2017.

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## 1. Introduction

The British playwright Ella Hickson, in her note to the play *The Authorised Kate Bane* explains the play's *raison d'être* as her preoccupation with authenticity in theatre. At around the same time of her musings on authenticity, Hickson met Demis Hassabis, a neuro-scientist working on memory. Hassabis (2017) investigates the mechanisms of memory recall, how these mechanisms support imagination and future thinking, connecting imagination with episodic memory. Upon her acquaintance with Hassabis, Hickson (2012) starts to think about the authenticity of character based on the idea that “we ‘wrote’ our pasts more than remembered them” (p. 7). Framing the play, *The Authorised Kate Bane*, upon the idea that we author our pasts, Hickson (2012) brings the concept of character right into the centre of the question of theatrical authenticity and inquires what makes a character “if characters aren't formed from their pasts” (p. 7).

Jan Assman (2008) claims that selfhood is related to time and with this relation memory helps us to build “an awareness of selfhood (identity)” (p. 109). Jerome Bruner (1994) defines the self as a complex construct of various mental processes of which memory is a necessary part and emphasises the narrative structure of the self: “One encounters the hero tale, the Bildungsroman, the tale of the victim, the love story, and so on. If one ever doubted Oscar Wilde's claim that life imitates art, reading autobiographies lessens the doubt” (p. 43). Craig Barclay (1994) calls the remembered self as “historical self” stressing the memory's distinctive feature of being “recollections that are part of a perceived pattern to one's life” (p. 55). Memory is essential in identity-building because stories we tell about ourselves create a sense of self. Evelyne Ender (2008) stresses the importance of remembrance in constructing selfhood because memory helps

*“to make sense of our lives by connecting to the thread of impressions, feelings, emotions that we have experienced. Memory images provide a fragmentary record of our deepest and most significant emotions, bringing us back to the singular of histories that define each individual's existence”* (p. 20).

Endel Tulving (1983) describes recollection as travelling back into the past in mind and refers to remembering past events as episodic memory (p. 1). According to Tulving (1983), episodic memory covers “unique, concrete, personal experiences dated in the rememberer's past” (p. V). Autobiographical memory similarly refers to “the memories a person has of his or her own life experiences” (Robinson, 1986: 19). William Brewer (1986) relates autobiographical memory to the self as it covers the information about the self (p. 26). Katherine Nelson (2008) distinguishes autobiographical memory from episodic memory and defines the former as memory containing recollections of personal significance (p. 8).<sup>3</sup>

As Dan McAdams (2009) writes: “the human brain is designed to construe experience in narrative terms” (p. 391). The narrative structure of memory points out the interpretative side of memory (re)construction connecting the dots in the remembered parts of the original event(s). That is why “our remembered selves are experienced as stable or as changing only gradually unless our lives are punctuated by some transformational event(s), for example, loss of job, birth of child, divorce, war” (Barclay, 1994: 59). Ender (2008) claims that remembrance is the basis of human individuality because “our thoughts, emotions, pleasures, and intentions only acquire an existential relevance when our remembrance casts them in a narrative pattern and create a self” (p. 3).

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<sup>3</sup> This paper prefers to use the terms episodic and autobiographical memory in a similar context with a focus on personal experiences.

Ella Hickson demonstrates the memory process through her characters depicting the unreliability of memory, remembering (and forgetting) as reconstructive acts. In writing her play, Kate is in a conscious effort to convey the past continually writing, deleting and editing the sentences she is writing. As the title suggests, Kate is trying to author her past to narrate her own authorial version of it, with, as in the words of Henry Sayre (1999), the “authority of the author – to originate stories, and let them multiply” (p. 268). Ender (2008) describes the writers as the “masters of make-believe and the supreme creators of imagined worlds” (p. 14). The question of authenticity arises at this point. Brink (as cited in Betzler, 2009: 62) describes the quality of authenticity as having “the capacity to respond to changes and re-integrate or reshape her evaluative outlook” and presents it as a prerequisite to “remain authentic, or to become authentic.” As Kate is arranging and rearranging her past -her memories- she, at the same time, is creating a new self, a new identity doing what Betzler (2009) proposes: “retain(s) the capacity to become aware of new reasons” (p. 64) forgoing the ones she has had once. She is not just giving an autobiographical account; she is rebuilding her life narrative, taking the stories from her past and transforming them into a more desired form for a prospective married life. The whole writing process is a repeated retelling in between a deliberate act of remembering the incidents of the past and imagining the same incidents to accommodate/adapt them to her current need of making an emotional peace with her divorced parents thereby starting a new married life. McAdams (2009) touches upon this as such:

*“Self-defining memories are vivid, emotionally charged, and repetitive memories that are related to an unresolved theme or issue in a person’s life story. Research suggests that self-defining memories and other important autobiographical scenes are often rehearsed and modified in repeated telling with friends. The quality of these interpersonal exchanges also influences how the original scene is recalled and told again”* (pp. 426-427).

Ella Hickson depicts Kate of the play in an effort to retrieve her childhood memories to reconcile not only with her painful past but also with her parents. While remembering Kate juxtaposes and integrates the past and present. She makes the proper changes to fit her remembrance into a narrative of personal history within the form of a stage play. Editing her play, Kate also rewrites her memories, reconstructs her past and self to get authorial versions of both. Memory as personal history establishes the self because, as discussed before, selfhood is how a person perceives and interprets his life. The play focusing on the interpretative and re/constructible structure of memory questions the trustworthiness of the human mind as well as the self on account of their susceptibility to change. Mounting its claim on the relationship between memory and selfhood, this paper deals with Ella Hickson’s play *The Authorised Kate Bane* addressing the interpretative, constructible and narrative quality of memory phenomena and its part in establishing the self as represented in the play by utilising content analysis method and analysing the data gathered through literature review.

## **2. Re-writing The Past**

Designated in a play-within-a-play structure, *The Authorised Kate Bane* has four narrative layers situated in four different settings in terms of remembrance. The play’s main narrative line is about the playwright Kate who is working on a stage play about her family. The second layer is the stage play Kate is writing. The third one, Memory, is Kate’s memory in which we witness her recollections as she is writing the play in the London flat. The fourth one is the Edit part in which Kate revises the play, which is a mixture of authentic memory pieces and fictive narration used while redrafting. In all layers, Kate’s memory is the focal point. The play has four characters: Kate, Kate’s father Ike, Kate’s mother Nessa and Kate’s boyfriend, Albin. The primary setting of the play is Kate’s and Albin’s flat in London, where Kate is writing her new play. Kelso is the setting of the play Kate is working on. The setting for Memory and Edit parts is the London flat.

On the opening night of her play, Kate is alone in her room and is deep in thought about her parents. Kate's inviting her parents to introduce her boyfriend, Albin, to them is what ignites Kate's mind to remember her childhood leading her to write a play about her family. She feels an emotional urge since her parents are coming the next morning:

*"KATE is left alone in the room.*

*KATE's head won't keep quiet.*

*KATE walks, with some purpose – towards her computer, she is going to write – she has to write, to get it down"* (Hickson, 2012: 12).

Her parents' visit causes some emotional reverberations. In times of crisis, important turning points and defining periods in one's life such as marriage, divorce, death of a beloved one, having a child, people tend to question what they believe to be their pasts trying to recreate it and thereby experiencing a notable change of self:

*"They may recast their life stories to embody new plots and characters and to emphasise different scenes from the past and different expectations for the future. They may set new life goals. The sense of the story's ending may change substantially, and as the envisioned ending changes, the entire narrative may become oriented in a very different way"* (McAdams, 2009: 423).

In the play, *The Authorised Kate Bane*, Kate, the playwright, starts to write about her family's past trying to reminisce the now painful memories of her childhood relationship with her father and mother. Douwe Draaisma (2015) purports that giving an autobiographical account of the childhood is not just about looking to the memory since the recollections are re-organised and re-told by excavating the buried memories and adapting them within the present frame of mind into a narrative which is more or less removed from the original childhood experience (p. 11).

Putting the course of life into a narrative may be a therapeutic experience since the narrator may regard recounting the life story as "salvation for or solution to an impending crisis in life... to set things right after years of confusion and trouble" (McAdams, 2009: 393). Kate Bane of the play is after a haunting past. She is re-working her memories through the means of her art of playwriting and is (re)constructing her memories anew to retain the memory of a father and a mother whom she has been detached from and wants to feel emotionally attached:

*"KATE. I don't know when it became so difficult. When I was little I used to be so excited about coming back at the end of the school day, we'd put the fire on and have dinner and snuggle on the sofa and in holidays we'd spend days and days in our pyjamas – just me and Dad, just reading or watching films or eating crumpets and it was cosy and – great – and – home. And then – then- something happens and suddenly one time you come back and it looks different, really different, because you – you changed and suddenly you find yourself ... judging. It's like you put on these glasses and suddenly a snack isn't a snack because you're hungry, it's a ridiculous fucking parmesan puff that Dad buys to look smart. And you realise that your family – the people you come from, are actually the "kind of people" that eat parmesan puffs are pretentious – but they're still Mum and Dad, right? But you have to laugh at the parmesan-puff people – because if you don't – it's like you don't realise that the parmesan puff actually means wealth and snobbery and social exclusion and weird aspiration – and if you don't see that then you're condoning it, you're accepting all that – and I do see – and so I should laugh. But it's still Dad – and – it's what I grew up with so you're actually laughing at your - self – but worse, your own home -you're laughing at your dad – and that's awful and heartbreaking and /"* (Hickson, 2012: 55).

Clark & Teasdale's study (as cited in Alan Baddeley, 1999: 164) notes the effect of mood in the memory process: The sad and depressed people tend to remember "unhappy incidents... the more

depressed the individual, the more rapidly the unpleasant experience is recalled". Kate reminisces a childhood memory in which Ike is sobbing and calling Kate probably to hug. Kate backs away, discomposing Ike. Scenes in London, Kelso and Memory are juxtaposing, crisscrossing in a way to reveal Kate's entangled mind and complicated feelings as read by Albin from the textbook of *On Creating Character*:

*"LONDON*

*KATE stops writing a moment – and stares at the computer screen.*

*KATE looks at ALBIN.*

*KATE. Don't say it like that.*

*KELSO*

*ALBIN. He's your dad.*

*KATE. Don't say it like that – I love him.*

*LONDON*

*KATE picks up a box of Final Draft software – looks at it.*

*KELSO*

*ALBIN takes the box out of KATE's hand and starts reading it.*

*ALBIN. It seems funny to teach this stuff if you've never done it ... Listen to this: "On Creating Character is brought to you by Final Draft, Inc. What kind of childhood would you say your character had? Happy? Or sad? What was her relationship like with her parents? Was she loved? Was she kind or spiteful? Was she ungrateful? Do you think she made friends easily, and got along well with relatives and other children? Was she difficult, selfish, manipulative? Was she kind of a child would you say she was? Was she outgoing and extroverted or shy and studious, an introvert? Let your imagination guide you." Kate? Which one were you? Come on?*

*MEMORY*

*IKE stands and looks at KATE.*

*IKE crumples, sobbing – he reaches out for KATE to help him.*

*KATE backs away – unsure.*

*IKE. Kate? Come here?*

*...*

*KELSO*

*ALBIN (continuing). Hey – come here –*

*KATE. I don't know.*

*IKE reaches out to KATE with a tray of brie-and-cranberry parcels.*

*IKE. Come here.*

*KATE. I don't know.*

*ALBIN. Kate?*

*IKE. Come here and give your dad a hug.*

*KATE backs away*" (Hickson, 2012: 24-26).

William Hirst (1994) upholds that memories are components utilised in diverse ways by the rememberer in the most proper narrative form placed in a broader context defining the things recalled at the same time (p. 252). Hirst (1994) explains this process as transmutation and alteration of self-construal describing a circular connection between "self-construal, narrative, and memory" (p. 253). Remembering is a narrative in that the rememberer selects, alters and remodels the memories he/she is going to use to construct the self among several recollections which are just modifiable and changeable ingredients of an autobiographical narration. The change in one causes successive changes, and this is why Hirst (1994) calls the relation between self-construction, narrative and memory as circular: "The complex interactions suggested by this circle assure an everchanging self-construal. Because one has a self, one is constantly interpreting experience. This interpretation will, in turn, impact on subsequent construals of self" (p. 253).

Robyn Fivush (1994) states that the self-narratives we are telling to ourselves and others are self-definitional declaring something about ourselves (p. 136). However, while narrating the events in our lives, we are selective in recalling: "Rememberers may supplement, change, or omit details as they construct pasts that adequately reflect their current knowledge" (Ross & Buehler, 1994: 207). On interpreting and reconstructing the past Eugene Winograd (1994) illustrates two factors: The first is that we take into consideration our present status. The second factor is the preference as to maintaining the consistency of the remembrance or changing the recollection in the present condition (p. 246). "The present influences the remembered past" (Winograd, 1994: 246). In the play *Kate* is writing, she and Albin are in her childhood room in Kelso, talking about Kate's memories of her parents:

*KATE. ... This room – I – I can't remember anything from before Mum left. I've been trying and there's almost nothing, the odd snapshots, but I think half of them are photos.*

*ALBIN. You were only ten.*

...

*KATE. It's just weird – thinking, they must have been in love, one – right? But I can't remember anything from when they were... it's weird. (Beat.) I remember this one time, Dad kissing Mum by the fireplace, but it seems really – foreign; like it's someone else, different faces – not my parents. The idea of them holding hands is ... I can't remember them ever touching.*

*ALBIN. Yeah – they don't seem that close*" (Hickson, 2012: 52).

The human brain tends to fill in the gaps with "biases, expectations and past knowledge" (Loftus, 1980: 49) thereby creating, in some cases, totally new memories of the same incident. Memory is open to alterations with both the past and new information; "we have a mechanism for updating memory that sometimes leaves the original memory intact, but sometimes does not" (Loftus, 1980: 49). The original memory may go through continuous change. What the episodic memory stores composes loosely organised single episodes which are "modified, recoded and erased" (Tulving, 1983: 45). The rememberer, says Tulving (1983), believes the truth of his retrieval, that what he reminisces is a facsimile, since recollection "is mental time travel, a sort of reliving of something that happened in the past" (p. 124). This act of recollection is, in truth, a reconstruction, a conscious reproduction of the original incident which only bears some similarity to its origin. "Like a person's perceptual experience of the present environment, recollective experience of past events can at best be only an incomplete and stylised model of the apprehended reality" (Tulving, 1983: 187). The remembering mind helps the rememberer to act as a storyteller/writer to recreate "what is absent, what is past and gone" (Ender, 2008: 17) to reconstruct a new one onto it:

*"KATE. I need to know what they did wrong.*

*ALBIN. What difference does it make – to now, to us?*

*KATE. I need to know which bit to cut out of me so that we can be happy"* (Hickson, 2012: 82).

Albin leaves; Kate is alone in the room, desperately searching something to hold onto about her past:

*"KATE stares at the room as if it might produce some sort of answer.*

*She suddenly stands and moves a chair to fetch a box down from the top shelf of one of the cupboards.*

*The box is full of photographs, trinkets, old birthday cards and five or six notebooks, bursting with ticket stubs and the scrawling writing of a teenage girl.*

*KATE starts flicking furiously through the diaries in search of some piece of evidence, some sentence that will confirm things for her-"* (Hickson, 2012: 83).

Jean Delay (as cited in Ender, 2008: 3) remarks that "memory is like a diary that writes itself" pointing out the (re)constructible nature of memory. On the same matter commenting on Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*, which is about episodic memory, Ender (2008) states that memory is:

*"... a miracle of engineering: the remembering mind stitches together, in a unique fashion, from a simple image to a scene, the most complex combination of thought, emotion, and words... that memories are constructions, that they depend on mood and context... namely that remembrance is an act of imagination"* (p. 4).

Kate, in the London flat after finishing the last piece of the play, reminisces. She has three different versions of the same memory containing various explanatory pieces for the emotional descriptions of the remembered event as to whether his father Ike is happy or sad:

*"LONDON*

*It's late in the evening – KATE is exhausted – she finishes the scene – she puts the pen down.*

*KATE looks around the office – she is alone.*

*ALBIN has not returned from work.*

*KATE checks her watch.*

*KATE (shouts down the stairs). Al? Al?*

*No response.*

*KATE turns from the door.*

*MEMORY*

*KATE is twelve with a suitcase in her hand – she's leaving the house to holiday with NESSA.*

*IKE stands at the door.*

*IKE. Are you off, then? Ready to go, eh? Have a good time with your mother. No, no, I'll be fine on my own; don't be silly. Have fun. I love you ... very much.*

*IKE waves KATE off – he smiles – he's pleased.*

*MEMORY*

*KATE is twelve with a suitcase in her hand – she's leaving the house to holiday with NESSA.*

*IKE stands at the door.*

*IKE. Are you off, then? Ready to go, eh? Have a good time your mother. No, no, I'll be fine on my own; don't be silly. Have fun. I love you ... very much.*

*IKE waves KATE off – he's desperately trying to hold back tears.*

**MEMORY**

*IKE. Have fun. I love you ... very much.*

*IKE waves KATE off – he smiles – he's pleased.*

*IKE. Have fun. I love you ... very much.*

*IKE waves KATE off – he's desperately trying to hold back tears.*

*IKE. Have fun. I love you ... very much.*

*IKE waves KATE off – he smiles – he's pleased.*

*IKE. Have fun. I love you ... very much.*

*IKE waves KATE off – he's desperately trying to hold back tears” (Hickson, 2012: 83-84).*

The remembering human subject is the author/authority of his past and that very past, in this case, may, at best, be false/fabricated memories. Remembering -the retrieval of memory- is an act of re-working the experiences in the present time and conditions. That is why episodic/ autobiographical memory may be regarded as a basis of self-understanding. On this matter, Dan McAdams' views on the creation of selfhood may provide insight. McAdams (2015) states that “modern people perceive themselves and their lives as *projects* that they must *work on*” and claims that many people “become storytellers of the self—*autobiographical authors* who try to make sense out of the confusion of modern life by constructing integrative self-narratives, complete with settings, scenes, characters, plots, and themes” (p. 240).

McAdams (2015) calls these self-narratives as personal myths providing meaning and verisimilitude rather than objective truth since human beings need meaning more than truth. In constructing a narrative self/identity, people reconstruct their pasts while imagining a future to explain the current self (pp. 250-251). During recollection, we change the content of the past event transforming it and even causing the loss of information. What we store in the episodic system can be easily changed, modified and lost because the information in this system consists of single episodes. There is a loose organisation among these episodes, which is vulnerable and thus susceptible to change.

McAdams (2015) posits reconstructing memories in an autobiographical narrative in a social context and labels it a lifetime pursuit starting with the adolescence. The rememberer tells his/her experiences to others, gets responses, retells those experiences by changing them in accordance with the reactions he/she gets. The rememberer does this not only for his/her past experiences but also for the new ones to construct a “narrative identity” (pp. 252-253).

Episodic/ autobiographical memory, in this case, is a basis for composing a new self-understanding as in the words of Žižek (2010) displaying the transformative power of storytelling as a result of the need to construct fictional realities: “Re-writing the past is an act of generosity which enables the subject to change her future” (p. 57). As Jo Alyson Parker (2006) states, memory is like a bridge binding past and present selves across time (p. 36). Present time Kate in Kelso recalling the past is not happy being at home with her father:

*“KATE. The more time I spend here, the more I become a person that doesn't get on with their parents, and those kinds of people rarely turn out happy. They aren't good people – they're messy and ... they've failed somehow.*

...

*KATE. I can't stand it when Dad hug me – he's been a great dad and he's loved me so much and he's never done anything – you know – weird – and yet I get really tense every time he tries to cuddle me ... I can't stand it. (Pause.) And it's really sad” (Hickson, 2012: 54).*

Kate has problems with her family's social status, wealth and way of life, thinking that they are not on the same line of thought or worldview. She is accusing her parents of being pretentious, which is what she criticises in her latest stage play:

*“KATE. We're not real people, we're pretending - we're parmesan fucking pretending!*

....

*KATE. If you ever bothered to go and see your mum, and brought her to see my play, she wouldn't be able to stomach it -and if you went to get her wearing that fucking cardigan you'd get five shades of shit kicked out of you before even got to your own front door. You'd look like a stranger in the house you grew up in. So do not be appalled at me for trying to tell you that I feel different to where I came from. I am trying not to pretend ... because I don't want to be pretend, because pretend people aren't very easy to love or to live with. The play is pretend – coasters – (Picks up the coaster.) are fucking pretend” (Hickson, 2012: 72-73).*

In building their life narratives, people may add new experiences to the previous ones, may lose or change existing memories, and may reminisce past events which they have long forgotten. Hirst (1994) claims that these revisions in the original remembrances are creative by setting up and consolidating the new memories through which a “different narrative might result from the changed mnemonic landscape... Old memories are revived, others changed, others forgotten, in an attempt to deal with the new theme” (p. 254). This is how, in the end, Kate overcomes her fear of being like her father, of being someone who has been left behind, alone, and is how she decides to marry Albin:

*“KATE. And we'll lie back and we'll just see - just see the dreams real and we'll build the pictures of it all and if we believe it then we can see it - and if we see it – together - with the living together and the baking and the cleaning and the shopping and the kids and the laughing and the getting old – if we can see it – if we can do that then we'll be okay - and all the worries, all the bad thoughts - we'll just blow them out – think them up and blow them out like whales - okay? Okay? Out our blowholes?*

...

*KATE. I'd like to marry you if that's okay? If you'd - it looks rather nice.*

*ALBIN. Yes, please. That sounds lovely.*

*They keep blowing a little” (Hickson, 2012: 104).*

If remembering is an act of recreation, how can we possibly assert that the recollection is authentic and veritable, not fiction? On this topic, Ulric Neisser (1994) is of the idea that memory is re/constructible (p. 5). If this is true, asks Neisser (1994) “Is it really possible for vivid recollections to be completely fabricated? Isn't there a ‘grain of truth’ in even the most distorted memory?” (p. 5) and the answer is positive: “The self that is remembered today is not the historical self of yesterday, but only

a reconstructed version. A different version - a new remembered self- may be reconstructed tomorrow” (Neisser, 1994: 8). Neisser (1994) aptly explains the verity problem:

*“Not all self-narratives are true. Even when people strive for accuracy, what they remember may not be just what happened. In episodic memory we must distinguish: (1) the actual event; (2) the event as it was experienced by the individual in question; (3) the subsequent act of remembering it; and (4) the remembered event, that is, the particular version of (1) that is established by (3). The analogous categories in autobiographical memory are: (1) actual past events and the historical self who participated in them; (2) those events as they were then experienced, including the individual’s own perceived self at the time; (3) the remembering self that is, the individual in the act of recalling those events on some later occasion; and (4) the remembered self, constructed on that occasion. Moreover, self-narratives do not rely on episodic memory alone. People often begin narratives with their own birth, although they do not remember it; sometimes they even start with the deeds of their ancestors. Later events may also be reported without being actually remembered, if the narrator is sufficiently sure of them” (p. 2).*

Daniel Albright (1994) speaking on the remembered self puts it as a “fragile construction” (p. 21). He parallels fictive works with self-narration claiming that human beings are curious whether they are authors writing fictions of themselves and inventing their own characters and identity. These created selves are fragile due to “the lack of a proper foundation” because the remembered self “begins and ends in a state of nothingness, and from beginning to end is riddled with nothingness” (Albright, 1994: 21).

On the same matter, Jerome Bruner (1994) points out that “... Self is a perpetually rewritten story. What we remember from the past is what is necessary to keep that story satisfactorily well formed” (p. 53). Through narration, we construct and reconstruct our memories within specific contexts. We adapt these memories to our needs telling us and the others who we are. Ross & Buehler (1994) reflect that we recall and interpret events creating pasts to satisfy our personal needs (p. 216).

The end of the play, at all layers, proves that Kate reaches the long-awaited peace of mind. In her memory play Kate finally makes peace with her parents and accepts Albin’s proposal. In the London flat, Kate, Albin and Kate’s parents display an affectionate and peaceful family scene:

*“ALBIN nods and exits to answer the door.*

*KATE stands and looks at the printed version of the play - holds it to her, it’s done.*

*KATE places the play in a bottom drawer and shuts it - it’s done.*

*KATE dresses quickly – smoothes down her hair.*

*ALBIN and IKE enter.*

*IKE. Kate.*

*KATE. Hey, Dad.*

*IKE hugs KATE- it’s long – he means it - he’s missed her. KATE hugs him back - with equal force.*

*Dad – this is Albin.*

*IKE. We met at the door.*

*ALBIN. Can I take your coat?*

*IKE. I thought you’d be taller.*

*There’s a knock at the door.*

*ALBIN. I'll get it.*

*IKE. Oh – lovely. He seems great.*

*KATE. He is.*

*Small beat - KATE smiles.*

*KATE picks up a bowl on the side.*

*Parmesan puff?*

*IKE. Don't mind if I do.*

*IKE picks up the puff.*

*ALBIN enters.*

*NESSA enters.*

*NESSA. Hello, Ike.*

*IKE. Nessa.*

*Beat.*

*ALBIN takes KATE's hand.*

*Blackout.*

*End of play" (Hickson, 2012: 108-109).*

### **3. Conclusion**

Demis Hassabis articulates that episodic memory is for the daily occurrences in a person's life and defines who he is. Hassabis (2017) also remarks on the new studies on episodic memory as it is a source of "planning for the future and imagining hypothetical events". Alan Baddeley (1999) declares that memory is essentially an interactive system which aptly stores, registers, encodes and retrieves the information it stores, without which "we could not perceive adequately, learn from our past, understand the present, or plan for the future" (p. 17). However, retrievals from the episodic memory are not identical representations but rather a mix of the fact and fiction. Baddeley (1999) commenting on the "reality" of the memories notes the need "to find some way of separating reality from dreams, delusions, and confabulations" (p. 127). Memory is actually of a flawed and fallible nature. Against the reliability of memory, Elizabeth Loftus (1980) stresses the fallibility of memory because our perceptions of things are prone to error (p. 37). We subject what we store in the memory to changes with either new factual or fictive pieces of information: "These distortions can be quite frightening, for they can cause us to have memories of things that never happened even in the most intelligent among us; memory thus is malleable" (Loftus, 1980: 37).

Despite the fact that memory is fallible, recollecting and consciously choosing the good and right bits which are best suited to the current needs would be enough to tell a new narrative of one's own:

*"ALBIN. Our brains can't tell the difference between something that is actually true and something we believe to be true.*

*KATE. So?*

*ALBIN. There are some things that happened to you that you never remember again – you just lose them – completely - and the sad thing is that those things we lose are probably the good bits – the*

*humdrum frequent happy bits – the body doesn't remember them because it doesn't need them for anything. You can't remember what you had for breakfast yesterday because you have breakfast every day and it's pretty enjoyable and easy to do. You've just got to re-remember. Get out all the good bits – go back, remember all the good stuff – join all those dots - make that story instead. Stop replaying the bad – stop being afraid that anyone is going to go away. You don't need to protect yourself.*

*KATE. Don't I?*

*ALBIN. If we go wrong, it is going to hurt like fuck - and thinking it through first, trying to defend yourself beforehand – isn't going to make the blindest bit of fucking difference - so you might as well not bother.*

*KATE looks back at ALBIN.*

*ALBIN nods down at KATE.*

*Beat.*

*Relax. Stop being afraid. Go back to being that little naked kid on the bed - and just don't let the fear in - be brave and relax. Tell your brain not to be afraid.*

*Silence - several seconds whilst the idea of it sits in KATE” (Hickson, 2012: 103).*

What is important here is that the recollection as a process of reconstruction may mark the existence of two different selves. It is because in episodic/autobiographical memory, “the me-experiencing-now becoming aware of a prior-me-experiencing its (prior) environment” (Reed, 1994: 283), which in turn means “a change in present circumstances can bring about a reorganisation and reinterpretation of prior encounters” (Reed, 1994: 287). James Olney (1980) asserts on this duality of selves that “we can recall what we were only from the complex perspective of what we are, which means that we may very well be recalling something that we never were at all” (p. 241). Similarly, Draaisma (2015) states that memories are reconstructions formed by both the past and present selves (p. 11).

Episodic memory stores the happenings in a person's daily life. These experiences are personal and unique. Nevertheless, during reminiscence, the content of the past experiences transforms, which causes loss of information to some extent. As a result, what we remember and what we have experienced will differ. The episodic memory stores the experiences in a loose organisation because it stores the information as single episodes. The connection between the episodes is weak and prone to modification. During remembrance, the mind -the memory- connects the dots, fills in the gaps, creates new episodes, erases the existent ones, brings out the latent memories. The resultant recollection thus is a copy, a second-hand version, a reconstruction of the original experience. However, each version is the rememberer's authorial creation and narrative which drifts apart from the original experience substituted with a personally satisfying one.

If what defines personality is what we have stored in the episodic memory, then the digression from the original experiences raises questions on the authenticity of the self. Life narratives, the stories of self, comprise continuously changing versions of the past experiences. What defines the self -the identity- is the sum of the past experiences, the resultant feelings and ideas. The remembering mind works in a personal context adapting the remembrances to the current needs of the rememberer. Authentic personality, then, is the result of the interaction between the past and the present designating the self-perception at a certain point.

In conclusion, the play is a retelling of the scientific views on memory, remembrance and selfhood. Ella Hickson demonstrates the memory process through her character Kate Bane discussing (in)authenticity of the character in terms of the unreliability of memory and remembering (and

forgetting) as reconstructive acts of self. Kate and the play is an epitome of how we construct and reconstruct memories anew in a flow of continuous narratives blending fictitious with the fact in the manner of an author. The scientific memory research studies how the mind works and how memory functions. On the one hand, to understand how we store and retrieve the information may need a neuroscientific and clinical investigation of the human brain. On the other hand, literary texts may provide us with valuable sources to study the memory process. This study contributes to the literature of memory to elucidate how literary works may supply literary cases/case stories and subjects in terms of human psychology and behaviour, to say the least, in a neuroscientific, psychological, neuropsychological, cognitive study of human mind and self.

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