

in memory studies, the innovations offered by the volume remains unfortunately behind the expectations raised in the introduction itself.

Nevertheless, there are notable contributions, such as the article by Pim den Boer, that succeed in bringing the debate on European memory to the level of the theoretical vanguard in memory research. In a text that can be read as a second introduction into the volume, den Boer locates the changing meaning of Europe within the waves and cycles of historiography since the end of the eighteenth century. The exploration of the different concepts of Europe that circulated after the French Revolution is most significant for the logics of the European. They illustrate for instance 'the need of a retrospective European dimension' to make sense of the experience of '1789'. In sum, the article exemplarily reflects the interrelation between the objects of memory research and its overarching theoretical horizon.

Overall, it should also be noticed that the book aims beyond the academic realm and desires to 'to make a contribution to the specific feeling of belonging together of Europeans' (p. 8) and Europeans' awareness of their shared past. For memory scholars this brings up the important question of how the European or other motivations can be combined with systematically using non-essentialist analytic categories, an aim that this volume also alludes to. It is certain that this tension between one's own context and the desire for inductive research procedure can only be assumed in a self-reflexive manner.

## References

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*Memory: Fragments of a Modern History*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2012. 319 pp. \$30.00. ISBN 9780226902586

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Modern book titles are not expected to provide more than a hint as to what is to be found between the covers. To get some idea of what this book is actually about, we need to explore the specific sense in which the key words of the title are used. Often this is quite clear. For a start, this is a *modern* history in the sense that it limits itself to twentieth-century material and a little beyond.

Second, the term 'memory' is used here in a very specific sense, particularly applicable to modern memory. It is understood exclusively as personal or autobiographical memory, intimately linked to defining individuals as selves with a personal history. There have been other understandings of memory: collective memory, Platonic memory and declarative memory to mention just three among many, but this book's highly individualized understanding of memory certainly accords with the cultural priorities of the people that appear in its pages.

The text is laid out in 11 chapters, each of which presents a sharply defined historical *fragment* dealing with such topics as the strange tale of a 'truth serum', the rise and fall of 'flashbulb memory' or the advent of 'false memory syndrome'. Each fragment has a distinctly episodic character,

covering a limited time span and introducing a particular set of historical actors who interact in a well told narrative arc. This makes for a lively and accessible account whose value is enhanced by a foundation of original archival and interview research.

Telling history in the form of fragments avoids the problem of an artificially constructed master narrative but leaves open the question of why precisely these fragments were selected. That question is not directly addressed in the text, but it is striking that all the episodes narrated here aroused considerable public interest in their time, an interest usually reflected in the mass media. So this is a history of memory insofar as that topic explicitly affected popular discourse. Where that condition applies, relevant professional opinion and research are marshalled, often at some length.

Although this is a book of historical fragments, certain thematic restrictions provide a significant degree of overall coherence. Apart from the focus on personal memory, there is a restriction, more implicit than explicit, with regard to the social contextualization of memory. What is presented in these pages is essentially a history of the way certain aspects of memory aroused significant public interest in one part of the world, North America, and more particularly the United States. Only one chapter, dealing with the contributions of the British psychologist, Frederick Bartlett, breaches this boundary, a digression that provides background for the awakening interest in his work among late twentieth-century American psychologists.

A restriction of focus does have advantages, not only because it enhances overall coherence but also because it allows for a firm anchoring of specific ideas about memory in a particular social context. There are plenty of examples here of how claims about memory were constructed, publicized, attacked and legitimized by particular groups and institutions facing unique historical situations. Legal authorities and the police feature quite prominently in several episodes, given their professional interest in extracting truthful testimony based on the memory of witnesses.

Courts of law had their own traditional practices for establishing truth in memory, but in twentieth-century America, they had to contend with the increasing influence of another source of authority on that question, namely, experts on 'memory science'. At various times, these experts included psychologists, psychiatrists, lay therapists and neuroscientists, but the claim to possess more and better knowledge of how human memory worked was common to them all. No matter how often their claims were discredited in individual cases, they could count on the enormous reserves of respect for the authority of modern science that existed among broad sections of this society. What passed as memory science could, however, take a variety of forms that appealed to different people in different situations. Many of the historical episodes described in this book therefore depict the waxing and waning of different forms of memory science in relation to fluctuating social circumstances.

In twentieth-century America, respect for whatever managed to sail under the flag of science existed side by side with a very strong tradition of self-help and what the author refers to as 'a vibrant culture of lay psychological exploration' (p. 7). The potential tension between these cultural givens emerges throughout this book. At one extreme, we find wildly popular cases of hypnotic age regression in which individuals appear to relive events they are certain occurred in their early childhood or even in past lives. Here, the 'science' becomes entirely spurious. At the other extreme, there are radical attempts by accredited experts to erase memory ('brainwashing') or to extract involuntary 'recall' of events that never occurred. In these cases, the power of expertise transcended all bounds.

More often, we encounter degrees of co-operation, based on converging interests, among professional experts and their subjects. These alliances became quite crucial in the late twentieth-century 'memory wars' between supporters of 'recovered memory' (usually of sexual abuse in childhood) and supporters of 'false memory syndrome' who maintained that many such 'memories' were not so

much recovered as invented. Both sides in these battles were constituted by victims and their professional enablers. The topic of personal memory had become highly politicized, as historical memory had always been, with law courts and public media functioning as major arenas of conflict.

Several of the episodes described in this book also show that memory politics did not provide the only grounds for a convergence between expert and lay ideas about memory. By mid-century, the theories of accredited experts and popular beliefs about memory were both heavily influenced by a pervasive familiarity with the products of widely marketed recording technologies, such as films, amateur photographs and audio recordings. This fact is well documented in the relevant chapters, but one might go further and ask just what made these recording technologies appear so promising as a model for how memory operated.

An answer to this question would have to recognize the existence of some general pre-understanding of what memory was. When the technologies came along, there was something about the way they were understood that fitted this cultural template. It was the quality of preserving a *copy* of a previous reality, a quality that was strongly emphasized in the marketing of these technologies, that seems to have been crucial for this fit. The camera, supposedly, did not lie and, potentially, neither did memory. For key figures in American military psychiatry and nascent neuropsychology, as much as for their lay collaborators, the brain housed fixed records of past experience. As in the case of model recording devices, the faithful reproduction of these records depended on the employment of special technologies, developing film in the one case and the manipulated 'recovery' of memories in the other. A contrary view that saw memory as reconstructive rather than reproductive seems to have developed significant traction only in the latter part of the century. It is tempting to point out that this was also a time when techniques for manipulating auditory, textual and visual records were becoming part of everyday life.

Such observations are prompted by the historical threads that appear in several chapters of a book whose value lies, not only in the inherent interest of the material it presents so well but also in the opening up of new directions for the exploration of personal memory as a historically situated and socially contextualized topic.

Peter Goldie

*The Mess Inside: Narrative, Emotion, & the Mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. 186 pp. £32.00. ISBN 978019 9230730

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Peter Goldie's untimely death is a tremendous loss to the philosophical community and to anyone interested in the wide range of issues he tackled with such intelligence and sensitivity. Reading his posthumously published book, *The Mess Inside: Narrative, Emotion, & the Mind*, is thus a bitter-sweet joy. In this work, Goldie brings many of the insights developed over the course of his philosophical career to bear in providing a mature and compelling account of narrative thought and its role in our lives. It is a powerful example of Goldie's characteristic ability to effortlessly integrate literature, aesthetics, metaphysics and psychology, and of the fruit that this integration can bear.

In the book, Goldie steers a middle course between 'narrativists' (like myself), who hold that narratives are integral to our identities, and 'narrative sceptics', who dismiss narrative thinking about the self as unimportant, or even damaging, to human existence. Narrativists, Goldie argues, fail to respect the distinction between the world (of which we are a part) and the various ways we might think about the world or the stories we might tell about it. This failure, he suggests, is not only misleading but can be emotionally and intellectually dangerous. He is equally adamant, however,