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**Kurt Danziger.** *Marking the Mind: A History of Memory.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. 320 pp. \$108 (cloth) ISBN-13: 978-0521898157. \$42 (paper) ISBN-13: 978-0521726412. \$37.32 (Kindle edition) ASIN: B001JEPW9K.

This book is a continuation of Kurt Danziger's last book, *Naming the Mind* (1997). The latter covered the history of psychological categories like intelligence, behavior, attitude, motivation, and personality. All of them are of relatively recent origin and it is easy to appreciate their social basis when it is known that they have a short history. The category of memory is a very different proposition. It has existed since the beginning of recorded history and has been the subject of human discourse ever since. It might, therefore, be tempting to see it as a natural kind, that is, a category that reflects the division of nature itself.

Because of this, Danziger opens the book with a question: "Does memory have a history?" Memory is usually seen as a quasi-biological phenomenon that does not vary over time. The only thing that might vary is our understanding of how it works. Danziger clearly does not accept this view. A key concept here is that of "mnemonic values." Societies differ in the expectations they place on memory and the resources they provide for the fulfillment of these tasks. To take an obvious example, greater demands are placed on memory in non-literate societies. This explains the importance of mnemonics in the ancient and medieval worlds. It is no accident that they declined in importance after the invention of the printing press. Technological developments can also lead to new demands. In nonliterate societies, accurate recall is not an important issue. Thus, music that is part of an oral tradition is rarely played the same way twice, just as stories that are part of an oral tradition are rarely told the same way twice. The availability of written records, as well as later developments like the photograph and the phonograph, brought the issue of accuracy to the fore. Technology has also provided us with metaphors of memory. These have ranged from the wax tablet to the digital computer. An important point that Danziger makes is that these metaphors are not adopted at random. They are intimately related to the memory practices of the society in which they exist. For example, the adoption of accuracy as a mnemonic value led to the idea of memory as a copying machine. The very notion of memory had changed as a result.

As Danziger points out, the entire history of memory cannot be covered in a single book. Indeed, one human lifetime would not be enough to cover it. He therefore selects different topics for the chapters of the book. Each one has its own chronology and is almost an independent piece of work. The topics covered include metaphors of memory, the use of mnemonics for improving memory, the relationship between memory and truth, the medicalization of memory, the rise of experimental psychology, the different types of memory that have been postulated over the years, such as episodic and semantic memory, and the various attempts to locate memory in the brain. Some of the details in these discussions are very interesting. We learn, for example, that Wundt did not establish an experimental psychology of memory because he did not regard it as a legitimate scientific category. Like reading or counting, "remembering" was an activity of the mind that was based on more fundamental processes. These views were not unusual in Germany at the time. We also learn that the work of Wilder Penfield has been widely misinterpreted. Penfield famously applied electrical stimulation to the brains of his patients during surgery, and they are said to have experienced memories of events that had been long forgotten. In reality, only a small percentage of his patients reported experiences of this kind and, even in these cases, it is far from clear that the reports were of

genuine memories. The misinterpretation is a product of the long-held desire to find a location for memory in the brain.

Space restrictions prevent me from discussing each one of these topics in detail. I will therefore concentrate on a key question that is posed at the end of the book: “Is memory in the head?” As Danziger points out, psychology has inherited an individualistic metaphysics from philosophy. Psychological phenomena are thought to occur in the heads of individuals, hence the long history of trying to find their location in the brain. Also, they have been traditionally studied in isolation from the social context in which they occur. Memory is not something we can see, touch, or smell. What we see are human activities, and we have learned through the course of socialization to apply the label “remembering” to some of them. However, these activities always take place in a social context, and it is only by studying them in this context that we can hope to understand them. Danziger points to Bartlett and Vygotsky as examples of psychologists who studied psychological phenomena in their social context. Thus the book is not just a contribution to history; it points to a different way of doing psychology. These views were implicit in *Naming the Mind*, but they are discussed in much greater detail in *Marking the Mind*. It goes without saying that these points apply not just to memory but also to the various other basic categories of psychology.

Danziger’s previous works, *Constructing the Subject* (1990) and *Naming the Mind*, broke new ground in the history of psychology and are now regarded as modern classics in the field. *Marking the Mind* is at least the equal of these works. It should be obligatory reading for historians of psychology. It should also be obligatory reading for experimental psychologists and cognitive scientists, but that may be too much to expect.

#### REFERENCES

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**Edwin R. Wallace IV and John Gach (Eds.). *History of Psychiatry and Medical Psychology: With an Epilogue on Psychiatry and the Mind–Body Relation*. New York: Springer Science + Business Media, 2008. 862 pp. \$219.00 (cloth). ISBN-13: 978-0387347080.**

As psychiatrists busy themselves with working out the details of the fifth version of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*—shrouded in secrecy, it must be added—the history of psychiatry, psychotherapy, and mental illness is as active and popular as ever before. Monographs, articles, biographies and memoirs, documentaries, and films about mental disorders and their treatment are now a regular part of historical scholarship and popular culture. The field has come a long way since its beginnings in the first half of the twentieth century, when mostly practitioners wrote histories in a more or less internalist and Whiggish fashion.