

To appear in C. Tileaga & E. Stokoe (Eds) (2015) *Discursive Psychology: Classic and Contemporary Issues*. London: Routledge.

## **Dilemmas of Memory: The Mind is not a Tape Recorder**

Steven D. Brown (University of Leicester)

Paula Reavey (London South Bank University)

### **Introduction**

Many researchers who have gravitated towards Discursive Psychology can produce very vivid accounts of when exactly it was that they 'lost their faith' in cognitive-experimental psychology. For one of us, it was during a lecture at the University of Reading, listening to an eminent psychologist describe the relationship of cognitive architecture to the brain using the well known metaphor of software running on hardware. Perhaps the metaphor was striking and innovative when it was freshly minted. But by the late 1980s, it seemed quite impoverished. Is that it? Is that what the rich contours of human experience come down to? Could it really be so simple?

Edwards and Potter's (1992) critique of 'truth' in cognitive-experimental approaches to memory and their alternative formulation of a discursive treatment of remembering, arrived at a fortuitous moment. Rather like the embattled Conservative government of the time, whose Chancellor, Nigel Lawson, is one of the central figures of the piece, so it felt that the dominant regime – the dreaded cognitivists – were losing their grip on the discipline. A new intellectual force was emerging, not from the heartlands of power, but from highly unlikely places such as Manchester, Milton Keynes, and most surprising of all, Loughborough. Change was coming.

Or at least that is how things felt, in the early 1990s. In what follows we will try to describe exactly why *The Chancellor's Memory* offered such a rewarding challenge to theoretical and methodological sensibilities, one that continues to shape and inform our own work today. But we will also try to make clear how that piece formalized the terms of engagement with cognitive-experimental psychology in a way that has ultimately been highly unproductive. We can see in this early work the effort to elevate discourse and conversation analysis beyond the status of mere methodology to the foundations for a new form of Psychology itself. And it is here that the Loughborough approach came to be somewhat peculiarly modeled on the regime it sought to supplant, the Blairist New Labour to the Thatcherism of cognitive-experimental psychology, if you like. The challenges of working through this difficult legacy will be one of our major themes.

### **Context**

Critical (Social) Psychology in the 1980s had reached something of an impasse. The classic early works of authors like Ken Gergen, Rom Harré and John Shotter had performed extensive diagnosis of just what was wrong with the discipline, but they were less than illuminating as to what would need to be done to create a viable alternative. As Brown and Locke put it:

The key texts of the crisis literature had all called for change in social psychology. To some extent 'experiments' became seen as emblematic of

all that was wrong with the discipline. The search for new methods then became at the same time shorthand for doing social psychology differently. However, the majority of the crisis literature proved to be very thin in terms of specific recommendations for appropriate methodologies. This left a generation of researchers in the unfortunate position of being 'against' experiments but with little sense of the alternatives (i.e. what they were actually 'for'). (Brown & Locke, 2010: 376)

It was in this very particular context that a 'turn to language' became so appealing. Mick Billig's (1987) work on rhetoric and Jeff Coulter's (1979) application of ethnomethodology had both been instrumental in nudging debates about the problem of imputing mental states away from philosophical discussion and towards the issue of methods. We can see this clearly in Derek Edwards's work in the 1980s. Edwards & Goodwin (1985) argue that lexical development in children is poorly grasped when it is treated in terms of gradual conceptual understanding, because this implies that 'thinking' precedes 'doing'. However, by looking at 'real world' instances of children's social interactions, it is clear that language is deployed pragmatically by the child to 'do things' before its referential function can be said to be established. This leads, in Edwards & Mercer (1987), to a concern with how the language of instruction in a classroom setting can construct understanding as a shared, communicative accomplishment.

Dave Middleton's early work shared this concern with the linguistic steering of children's activities, having been part of the group that refined the experimental demonstration of 'scaffolding' in parent-child interactions (see Woods & Middleton, 1975; Woods, Bruner & Ross, 1975). These studies were critical to a move in developmental psychology of placing cognitive development in a socio-cultural context. Together, Edwards & Middleton took these varied ingredients of pragmatics, communicative settings, interaction and 'thinking through doing', and applied them to the study of memory. Why exactly it is that they chose to focus on memory, rather than any of the other key topic areas of either developmental or social psychology, is a little unclear. There appears to be a certain arbitrariness here, much as there is with Potter & Wetherell's (1987) treatment of attribution theory or Potter & Litton's (1985) engagement with social representations, where the point of the exercise is deconstruct 'traditional' approaches by showing the viability of a rhetorical and discursive alternative, rather than a sustained effort to move the topic on per se (see also Edwards et al, 1992: 445). To this end, Edwards & Middleton conducted a series of studies using both quasi-experimental methods (the 'E.T.' study – Edwards & Middleton, 1986) and semi-naturalistic data collection (the family photographs study – Edwards & Middleton, 1988). These studies generated transcribed interactional material that Edwards & Middleton analysed to show how versions of past events were jointly negotiated in an argumentative context using a variety of discursive devices (see Middleton & Edwards, 1990).

The *Chancellor's Memory* paper builds on the work of Middleton & Edwards by refining the focus. In the edited volume, *Collective Remembering*, a fairly wide-

ranging agenda had been set out that included themes such as the 'social practice of commemoration', the 'social foundation and context of individual memory' and 'social institutional remembering and forgetting'. These themes are fairly marginal to Edwards & Potter (1992), who concentrate instead on the wholesale 'bracketing out' of subjectivity and experience, along with the methods of experimental psychology. If the earlier work had implied that discourse analysis and pragmatics expanded the toolkit of psychology, here Edwards & Potter were clear that it was instead intended to replace them:

[I]n any account of conversational remembering, what is required is not merely an extension of traditional cognitive concerns into real-world settings, but a re-focusing of attention upon the dynamics of social action, and in particular, of discourse. (Edwards & Potter, 1992: 188)

The argument turns upon an initial critique of Ulrich Neisser's (1981) paper on 'John Dean's Memory'. Neisser's career, like that of Jerome Bruner, straddled the emergence of cognitive psychology in the 1970s. Both had been trained in the heady mix of Gestalt psychology and perceptual research and had arrived at the conclusion, contra the dominant behaviourist paradigm, that it was necessary to study 'thinking' as an active, reflexive force in shaping human action rather than the residual echo left by stimulus-response chains. As Graham Richards (2010) and Jean-Pierre Dupuy (2000) have shown, it is difficult for us to now properly appreciate just how radical information theory and cybernetics was to 'pre-cognitive' psychologists. Notions such as feedback loops and signal/noise pairings made it possible to envisage a psychological subject embedded in an informational ecology in which she or he could operate as an active agent. However, it is to Neisser's very great credit that, despite having drawn together the implications of information theory for a *Cognitive Psychology*, he later came to see (as did Bruner) the limitations of the dogmatism of the 'standard model' of cognitive processes that had initially formulated.

In the 1981 paper, published in *Cognition: The international journal of Cognitive Science*, Neisser is performing a rather delicate act. He is, in effect, telling an audience of committed cognitive-experimentalists that they have been getting something very important wrong. Because they have studied memory solely in laboratory settings, they have blinded themselves to the complexity of how memory actually functions in daily life:

In a psychological experiment, it is relatively easy to determine whether what the subject says is true. The experimenter knows what really happened because she staged it in the first place, or because she kept a record with which the subject's report can be compared. Because life does not keep such records, legal testimony is usually evaluated in more indirect ways: corroborative witnesses, cross-examination, circumstantial evidence. For some of Dean's testimony, however, it is now possible to compare what he said with a factual record: the *Presidential Transcripts*. This comparison will enable us to assess the accuracy of his memory rather precisely. In addition, it may clarify our theoretical conceptions of memory itself. (Neisser, 1981: 2)

This passage is interpretatively rich. Neisser contrasts what happens inside the laboratory with what happens outside of it (i.e. the vast majority of human experience). Experimentalists are correct to be confident in the findings of memory experiments, he states, because they have 'staged' events in such a way as to have a clear point of comparison. But outside of the laboratory, this is simply not possible. However, all is not lost! Sometimes institutions create records of their own which may act in ways analogous to experimental practices. If the audience is willing to hear, Neisser will go on to demonstrate just what can be done if one cares to look closely at these records.

In this invitation to follow him 'outside the laboratory', Neisser simultaneously flatters and entices his audience. At the time he was already a grandee figure in the discipline, a world-renowned figure and founder of the paradigm in which the audience were deeply embedded. But he was also a figure who had become, suddenly and unexpectedly, rather controversial. Three years earlier, Neisser had attempted to engage this same audience of hardcore cognitivists with rather less enticing statement - 'If X is an interesting or socially important aspect of memory, then psychologists have hardly ever studied X' (Neisser, 1978: 4). The 1981 passage needs to be alongside the 1978 statement. By the time of *John Dean's Memory*, Neisser has blown a great deal of his professional capital, he can no longer demand his audience's attention, he has instead to work to whet their appetite with a taster of what might await them if they were prepared to suspend their prejudices.

This is not the way that Edwards & Potter (1992) read Neisser's invitation. They take it as demonstration that whilst he is making a 'significant and welcome departure' (p.189), in the end a leopard never really changes its spots. He remains fixated on the idea that it is, somehow, possible to establish the 'truth' of what happened, and thereby assess the veridicality of what is remembered. The alternative analysis that Edwards & Potter (1992) conduct is developed first in relation to John Dean's testimony and then further fleshed out using the 'Lawsongate' example. Their key argument is that throughout his testimony, 'Dean's *truth* is indistinguishable from his mode of accounting' (p.194). The various claims he makes around what he can and cannot remember and the way in which he organizes his accounts of the meetings with Nixon are treated as rhetorically organized to attend to the ongoing interactional pragmatics of the hearings. Edwards & Potter make a very compelling case that variation in the accounts that Dean offers - sometimes appearing to make 'verbatim' recall, at other times decrying that his 'mind is not a tape recorder' - can be understood as contextually occasioned. In building this argument, Edwards & Potter draw support from Molotch & Boden's (1985) work, which focused on a different set of data to that used by Neisser, made up of transcripts of the hearing Dean attended where he was questioned by a US Senator widely considered to be 'Nixon's man', who was as a consequence hearably antagonistic towards Dean. Neisser is then seen as having only 'half the story'.

The Lawsongate material gets a very similar treatment, although one which probably benefits from the cultural knowledge that Edwards & Potter bring to

the material (e.g. how the Parliamentary 'lobby' system works; background knowledge on the political fortunes of the ruling Conservative Party). One of the key aspects to the analysis is how the issue of the 'missing tape' is treated in the exchanges. Here there is apparently no possibility of establishing a 'bottom line' account of 'the truth of what happened'. Edwards & Potter thus demonstrate that pragmatically oriented claims to 'truth' are central resources to the unfolding of social action, rather than matters that lay in the hands of the analyst. Here we see an empirical working through of what would come to be, for a time, a very particular preoccupation in Discursive Psychology – the absence of 'bottom line' accounts – which would go on to be developed in its own right in *Death and Furniture*.

A number of other stylistic and methodological details of the piece are worth remarking on here. The analysis is initially framed with the three themes of 'function', 'variation' and 'construction'. This loose framing of the way that discourse works is found in both *Discourse and Social Psychology* and *Collective Remembering*, before becoming superseded by the more tightly organized Discourse Action Model (DAM) in *Discursive Psychology*. Whether or not the apocryphal story is correct that DAM was created to satisfy the demands of the reviewers of Edwards & Potter's *Psychological Review* piece ('where's the damn theory then?'), it seems reasonable to suppose that nascent Discursive Psychology became more formalized as a consequence of the effort to communicate the approach to a cognitive-experimental audience. *The Chancellor's Memory* is, after all, published in the journal *Applied Cognitive Psychology* – the first and last time its avid readers were offered such a methodological joyride outside the laboratory, we imagine.

### **What Happened Next**

The response to the effort made in *The Chancellor's Memory* to engage with the cognitive-experimental community can best be gauged by looking at the published commentaries to an invited paper that Edwards, Middleton and Potter contributed to *The Psychologist*. The Edwards et al (1992) piece opens by repeating many of the objections to the laboratory study of memory discussed by Middleton & Edwards (1990) and Edwards & Potter (1992), before briefly summarizing recent work at Loughborough using DAM as a guide. The tone is interesting. If Neisser, in *John Dean's Memory*, attempts to lure psychologists from the laboratory with the promise of the delights in store outside, Edwards et al are telling cognitive-experimentalists that their jobs have been outsourced to more effective workers and they might as well leave the laboratory before it is closed down. Unsurprisingly, the responses range from the nonplussed to barely restrained fury. Some reject discursive work on the grounds that is simply unscientific:

If you cast your lot in with the empiricists in the seventeenth century, and feel a thrill at trouncing the rationalists, then the study of memory in the twentieth century impose a simple criterion to determine the truth of a hypothesis: systematic, controlled observation yielding replicable results. Can discourse analysis provide such data? (Banaji, 1992: 448).

On this count, Discursive Psychology does not meet the bar for an empirical science. But the argument is reversed by Roediger & Wheeler, who see a potential 'gold mine' of data but with very little theoretical coherence:

we have tried several times to comprehend the nine tenets of DAM ... but ... fear that we have failed. The model seems so general that it excludes nothing ... At one point in our efforts to understand discursive remembering we looked up *discursive* in the *Oxford American Dictionary* (1980) and were informed discursive means 'rambling from one subject to another'. Just so. (Roediger & Wheeler, 1992: 453)

These two arguments – Discursive Psychology as neither sufficiently empirical nor convincingly theoretical – would be repeated time after time in the coming decades. And the response would eventually harden into a mantra: Discursive Psychology is rigorously empirical, but the nature of this rigor exceeds the narrow and naïve definitions of scientificity used by cognitive-experimentalists (e.g. Edwards, 2012); Discursive Psychology rejects ungrounded theorizing, instead producing descriptions of the pervasive features of social life that are superior to mere conceptual deduction (e.g. Potter, 2012a).

One further response is worth considering. Alan Baddeley – the Godfather of British psychology of memory – asks whether discursive work properly concerns memory at all:

What emerges then is that the authors are interested in the social interaction between members of groups, and its verbal expressions, and that find remembering a useful topic for generating such interaction. Hardly a model of memory, but potentially a very interesting topic. (Baddeley, 1992: 447)

We might see this simply as Baddeley displaying his displeasure at the lack of respect he and his work had been shown by these upstarts whose names were barely known in the hallowed circles of the Experimental Psychological Society – 'In conclusion then, while I do not propose to give up cognitive psychology, I am intrigued to know what Dr Edwards and his colleagues have been finding out about groups reminiscing' (p.448). But he also has a point. *The Chancellor's Memory*, along with the Edwards et al (1992) piece, is not, strictly speaking about 'memory' at all. It is an attempt to show how the subject matter parsed by cognitive psychology can be lifted wholesale into a discursive approach. This will be the long-term project of Discursive Psychology – setting out a way of doing Psychology as the study of the discursive practices in which 'mental life' is rendered operant in the pragmatics of communication. As Edwards & Potter (1992) conclude:

Our recommendation is to let go of a commitment to mind as a pre-existing, independently knowable explanation of talk and action ... Like the 'truth', the cognitions that are thought to apprehend and distort it are also researchable as discursive formulations, as versions of mental life,

framed in talk and text, and oriented to the pragmatics of communication. The study of how conceptualizations of cognitive processes are deployed in everyday and scientific discourses will be a major focus of further work. (Edwards & Potter, 1992: 211)

Even if one is sympathetic to what is being said here (as indeed we are!), it is difficult to see what purpose is served by 'recommending' to cognitive-experimentalists that they 'let go' of the paradigmatic basis on which their intellectual commitments, and indeed careers, are formed. Everything we know about paradigms, since Kuhn (1962), suggests that communities of researchers are not simply persuaded into new modes of working, they are reluctantly forced to do so when the groundswell of evidence makes current practices untenable. Interestingly, in the decade that separates *John Dean's Memory* from *The Chancellor's Memory*, a movement had begun – the 'everyday memory' tradition (Conway, 1991) – that is now, arguably, building to the kind of groundswell that might bring about the sort of conceptual re-orientation that Edwards & Potter called for. It was within this emergent body of work that Neisser rebuilt his reputation after the 1978 comments (Neisser, 1982; Fivush & Neisser, 1994).

It is unclear what, if anything, is gained in epistemic terms by making unequivocal assertions about what is and what is not to be properly called 'Psychology' given the diverse and complex historical emergence of the discipline. But Baddeley's barb that that Discursive Psychology has no 'model of memory' does stick. To treat remembering as primarily researchable in terms of the interactional formulation of descriptions and claims about the past is to miss what is, for all of us, a crucial aspect of 'memory'. We all feel a connection between what we are doing now and our personal and collective histories. That felt connection, which we might gloss as a 'flow of experience', is a critical resource that we all draw upon in making sense of any given interaction. Whilst it most certainly does not drive how we 'frame versions of mental life in talk and text' in any causal way, and most definitely is not adequately grasped with the kinds of 'models of memory' associated with Baddeley, the flow of experience is a significant issue for any putative psychology of memory.

## Critique

In this last section, we want to begin by pointing to a division within Discursive Psychology that occurs around the publication of *The Chancellor's Memory*. Following the reception of *Collective Remembering*, Dave Middleton signed a contract with the publisher, Sage, to author a research monograph, provisionally entitled *Social Remembering*, by 1992. As is the way with such projects, there was some drift in the timeline... In fact, the book was not published until many years later, in 2005, with a different title *The Social Psychology of Experience*, and with one of us attached as a co-author.

Why did it take so long to complete this book? If one reads the second half of the Edwards et al (1992) piece, there are various indications of what *Social Remembering* might have looked like, had it been completed as planned. It would most likely have focused on remembering as a process for producing collectivity

or 'communities of memory' through a work of 'becoming members again' ('remembering'). Middleton would come to describe this process as the interdependency of the individual and the collective (see Middleton, 2002). By this he meant that it was analytically important to keep a hold of the notion of 'the individual', but just not in the way that cognitive-experimental psychology had come to define it. This concern with personhood had, he felt, been jettisoned by Discursive Psychology in its move to 'let go' of the philosophical and operational difficulties implied by the concept of 'mind'.

In order to explain why Middleton felt this was important, we have to consider where the project of 'letting go of mind' has gone since in Discursive Psychology. Potter's (2012b) short commentary on Creswell (2012) provides a good summary. In this piece, Potter responds to the resurgent interest in the term 'experience' in contemporary social science. He cites the later Wittgenstein's (1958) classic argument on thinking as language as having sufficiently addressed all relevant philosophical matters, and then details a range of foreboding methodological issues that confront the researcher who is nevertheless determined to find a means of engaging with experience as an extra-discursive matter. Particularly ire is (justly) reserved for 'Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis' (IPA) (see Smith et al, 2009), which is seen as ducking the issue entirely by conflating talk about mental states with these states themselves. Discursive Psychologists, by contrast, start with 'practices and people acting in relation to one another, and bracket off issues of cognition' (p.577). In detailing these difficulties, Potter performs himself as somewhat exasperated by 'a common but unnecessary nostalgia for a more classic form of 'interiority'' (p.586). This he names as either 'dualism' or 'cognitivism'. The alternative is to respecify psychological categories as interactionally occasioned descriptions made in particular communicative settings. He finds himself incredulous that 'even after some 20 years since the publication of *Discursive Psychology* ... researchers of all flavours still have difficulties in accommodating this radical move' (p. 577).

But what is the nature of this 'radical move'? It consists of reifying the very dualism it seeks to unpick. If there is something called 'experience' that differs from discursive practice, then, the argument goes, it can only be located in the 'interior' realm of the Cartesian subject. Cognition is either a discursive matter or an 'in-the-head' matter (in which case it is probably either inaccessible or uninteresting and can be safely bracketed out). This is a version of cognition that is not altogether recognizable to contemporary cognitive science. The 'extended mind' hypothesis of Clark & Chalmers (1998), for example, applies the term 'cognition' to activities that occur 'outside the head' as well as 'inside'. John Sutton and colleagues have developed 'distributed cognition' approaches to social remembering that point to the crucial role of material mediators such as diaries or electronic devices (Sutton et al, 2010). Recent work in 'enactive' and 'embodied' cognition aims at pushing further at the boundaries between self and world to see thinking as fundamentally a matter of doing (Colombetti, 2014). And in contemporary philosophy, the displacement of cognition from a Cartesian version of mind continues apace with the renewed interest in the process philosophies of AN Whitehead (1985) and Henri Bergson (1991).



The issue here is that there is nothing terribly radical at all about the move of respecifying the psychological in interactional terms (as Ian Hacking 1999 once noted in relation to Coulter's work). The impact of post-dualist approaches such as Actor-Network Theory and the double whammy of Foucauldian and Deleuzian philosophies as the metaphysics of choice for social scientists who see themselves on the cutting edge, has left contemporary work completely unfettered by any notion of interiority across vast swathes of Sociology, Human Geography, Cultural Theory, Management Studies, International Relations, Science and Technology Studies ... and the list goes on. Discursive Psychologists are really pushing at an open door outside of the discipline with arguments such as the following:

Clearly language, or discourse, is not all that there is in the world, not all that psychology and society are made of, and not the same thing as experience, or reality, or feelings, or knowledge. It is just language, discourse, or talk-in-interaction: not those other things. But *it is the primary work of language to make all those 'other' phenomena accountable* (Edwards, 2006: 42).

Few readers of outlets such as, say, *Environment and Planning D: Society & Space* or *Journal of Cultural Economy* would find anything here objectionable. In fact they might very well see themselves as taking a similar tack in their own empirical work, namely getting at 'psychology' or 'society' through the interactional work through which these things are constituted. And this brings us the central problem. Given the spread of post-dualist thinking across the social sciences, what is it exactly that makes Discursive Psychology particularly 'psychological'? Or put another way, if discourse is 'not the same thing' as 'experience' or 'feelings', then whose task is it to explore this difference in a post-cognitive framework if not psychologists? Why keep strictly to the project of purifying any extra-discursive conception of subjectivity, experience or mind from a psychology of memory?

In a curious way, Edwards & Potter seem to have swapped places with Neisser. Where the latter once appeared to be attempting to prolong an ageing paradigm beyond its natural lifespan by proposing a move outside the laboratory, it is Potter who now claims that the increasing focus on naturalistic data in Discursive Psychology 'promotes innovative analyses, pushes researchers off well-worn social science agendas, and promotes powerful leverage for real-life problems and issues' (2012b: 577). If Neisser seemed to be suggesting that there was little that cognitivism could not explain, then Potter appears to be currently attracted to the same position – 'Despite the burgeoning evidence of supposed 'phenomenological' research, it is not clear that any other perspective provides as nuanced an account of psychological matters as they are threaded through people's lives and provides a more systematic, rigorous and repeatable analysis' (2012b: 586). This last phrase is particularly striking. Discursive Psychology has its roots in the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge, a discipline that was acutely aware of the vacuous nature of claims to 'systematicity', 'rigor', and most notoriously 'replication' (see Ashmore, 1989; Collins, 1992; Gilbert & Mulkay, 1984). To see these terms repeated here without any apparent irony, is most

peculiar (compare with Edwards et al, 1992: 454).

The main thrust of Edwards & Potter's (1992) critique of Neisser is that he treats the *Presidential Transcripts* as a 'bottom line' against which the veridicality of Dean's testimony can be established. But what are we to make of the centrality of the methodological drive towards more 'systematic' and 'rigorous' data collection in current Discursive Psychology, where only recorded 'naturalistic data' is deemed adequate for analytic purposes, and other forms of data are dismissed as 'got up' (see Potter, 2012b)? Ashmore et al (2004) refer to this as 'tape fetishism' – the idea that the tape functions as a kind of time machine that transports the analyst back to 'where the action is' and thereby serves as hotline to getting in touch with the 'richness' and 'intricacies' of actual people interacting with each other in real time' (Potter, 2012b: 448). If the psychology of memory is arguably at its strongest when it entertains methodological pluralism and makes a concerted effort to constructively engage with analytic and epistemic differences, in precisely the manner that Edwards & Potter (1992) asked of their readers, then the spirit of early cognitivism, its dream that the difficult questions around the psychological were simply methodological issues to be overcome by better techniques, lives on proudly in contemporary Discursive Psychology. Neisser, at least, thought there was a way out of his laboratory.

And that is why, we think, Middleton never published the planned version of *Social Remembering*. He came to appreciate that the difficulties of constituting a genuinely social approach to the psychology of memory involved more than purely technical questions. The kind of analysis required, whilst still grounded in the evidential base supplied by 'the tape', could not be reduced to its re-description, in the same way that his earlier work on 'scaffolding' could not be hung entirely on experimental data. In his work after the Edwards et al (1992) piece, Middleton engaged with sociocultural psychology, an area where his many contributions continue to be celebrated (e.g. Middleton, 1997; 2002). He found here an intellectual project where memory was not treated as an arbitrary term for marking certain kinds of descriptive practices, but instead referred to substantive human activities for making use of the past in the present, and connected together important figures in the discipline, such as Bartlett and Vygotsky. Curiously, sociocultural psychology also offers a connection back to Neisser's work, through the 'sociocultural model of autobiographical memory' formulated by his former colleague, Robyn Fivush (Fivush et al, 2011). It turns out that the meeting of cognitivism with discourse analysis announced by Edwards & Potter ended up taking place elsewhere.

The book Middleton did eventually publish, *The Social Psychology of Experience*, was yet another turn. The problem of how to think continuity and interdependence, how we turn around on the past in the present, is thought through Bergson, Halbwachs & Bartlett. Whilst there is ample transcribed data to be found throughout, theory is used to 'amplify' and transform what is on the tape to situate a given interaction in an account of a broader flow of experience. That text was one of the points of departure for our own current work (Brown & Reavey, 2015), where we argue that in the case of difficult or distressing experiences, it is incorrect to assert that there a multitude of possible versions of

events that are interactionally available to survivors. It seems to us that the problem is rather that persons feel 'locked into' very specific versions of events. However, the dynamics of memory in play are broadly distributed across relationships, institutions, material affordances and – of course – discursive practices. What interests us is developing 'post-cognitive' accounts of remembering that nevertheless does not deny that we have a felt connection to our past that shapes the versions of events we are able to muster.

We are not alone in wanting to expand the 'rich surface' of human conduct around memory that is so celebrated by Edwards and Potter to include 'extra-discursive' matters. Kyoko Murakami's (2012) work has begun to explore how a re-thinking of temporality impacts on an interactional analysis of remembering. Lucas Bietti (2014) is involved in an audacious project to connect discursive approaches to memory with cognitive and linguistic models. David Kaposi (2011) has sketched out a view of the psychology of memory as a 'political and moral science' based on a re-reading of Edwards & Potter (1992). And closer still to home, Cristian Tileagă's (2009; 2011) ongoing research is mobilizing a concept of ideology in relation to the joint-construction of the biographical and the historical. Much as we appreciate the purist connoisseurship of the way Discursive Psychology handles the 'exquisite', 'intricate' and 'rich' conversational practices that are – of course! – at work in remembering, we find these searching explorations of the messy and dirty meshwork of discursive and extra-discursive relations more to our taste.

## References

- Ashmore, M. 1989. *The Reflexive Thesis: Wrighting Sociology of Scientific Knowledge*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Bergson, H. ([1908]1991) *Matter and memory*. New York: Zone.
- Bietti, L. (2014) *Discursive remembering: Individual and collective remembering as a discursive, cognitive and historical process*. Berlin: Walter De Gruyter
- Billig, M. (1987) *Arguing and thinking: A rhetorical approach to social psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, S.D. & Locke, A. (2008) Social psychology *Handbook of qualitative methods in psychology* C. Willig & W. Stainton Rogers (Eds) pp.373-389 London: Sage.
- Brown, S.D. & Reavey, P. (2015) *Vital memories: Affect, ethics and agency*. London: Routledge.
- Collins, H. (1992) *Changing order: Replication and induction in scientific practice*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Colombetti, G. (2014) *The feeling body: affective science meets the enactive mind*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Conway, M. (1991) In defence of everyday memory. *American Psychologist*, 46, 19-26.
- Coulter, J. (1979) *The social construction of mind*. London: Sage.
- Edwards, D. (2006) Discourse, cognition and social practices: the rich surface of language and social interaction. *Discourse Studies*, 8(1), 41-49.
- Edwards, D. (2012) Discursive and scientific psychology. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 51, 425-435.

- Edwards, D. & Goodwin, R.Q. (1985) The language of shared attention and visual experience: A functional study of early nomination. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 9(4), 475-493.
- Edwards, D. & Mercer, N.M. (1987) *Common knowledge: The development of understanding in the classroom*. London: Methuen.
- Edwards, D., & Middleton, D. (1986). Joint remembering: Constructing an account of shared experience through conversational discourse. *Discourse Processes*, 9, 423-459.
- Edwards, D., & Middleton, D. (1988). Conversational remembering and family relationships: How children learn to remember. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 5, 3-25.
- Edwards, D., Middleton, D. & Potter, J. (1992). Towards a discursive psychology of remembering. *The Psychologist*, 5, 56-60.
- Edwards, D. & Potter, J. (1992) The Chancellor's memory: Rhetoric and truth in discursive remembering. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 6, 187-215.
- Edwards, D., & Potter, J. (1993). Language and causation: A discursive action model of description and attribution. *Psychological Review*, 100 (1), 23-41.
- Fivush, R., Habermas, T., Waters, T.E.A., & Zaman, W. (2011) The making of autobiographical memory: Intersections of culture, narratives and identity. *International Journal of Psychology*, 46(5), 321-345.
- Fivush, R. & Neisser, U. (Eds) (1994) *The remembering self: Construction and accuracy in self-narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gilbert, G.N. & Mulkay, M. (1984) *Opening Pandora's box: a sociological analysis of scientists' discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hacking, I. (1999) *The social construction of what?* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Kaposi, D. (2011) Truth and rhetoric: The promise of John Dean's memory to the discipline of Psychology. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 42, 1-19.
- Middleton, D. (1997) The social organisation of conversational remembering: Experience as individual and collective concerns. *Mind, Culture and Activity*, 4(2) 71-85.
- Middleton, D. (2002). Succession and change in the socio-cultural use of memory: Building-in the past in communicative action. *Culture & Psychology*, 8(1), 79-95.
- Middleton, D. & Edwards, D. (1990) *Collective Remembering*. London: Sage
- Middleton, D. & Brown, S.D. (2005) *The social psychology of experience: Studies in remembering and forgetting*. London: Sage.
- Murakami, K. (2012) Time for memory: Beyond spatial metaphors? *Culture & Psychology*, 18(1), 3-13.
- Neisser, U. (1981) John Dean's memory: a case study. *Cognition*, 9, 1-22.
- Neisser, U. (1982) *Memory observed*. Oxford: WH Freeman.
- Potter, J. & Wetherell, M. (1987). *Discourse and social psychology: Beyond attitudes and behaviour*. London: Sage.
- Potter, J. (2012a) How to study experience. *Discourse and Society*, 23(5), 576-588.
- Potter, J. (2012b) Re-reading Discourse and Social Psychology: transforming social psychology. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 51, 436-455.

To appear in C. Tileaga & E. Stokoe (Eds) (2015) *Discursive Psychology: Classic and Contemporary Issues*. London: Routledge.

Richards, G. (2009) *Putting psychology in its place: Critical historical perspectives*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Routledge.

Roediger, H.L. & Wheeler, M.A. (1992) Discursive remembering: A brief note. *The Psychologist*, 5, 452-453.

Smith, J.A., Flowers, P. and Larkin, M. (2009) *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method, Research*. London: Sage.

Sutton, J., Harris, C.B., Keil, P.G., & Barnier, A.J. (2010) The psychology of memory, extended cognition and socially distributed remembering. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 9 (4), 521-560

Tileagã, C. (2009) The social organization of representations of history: The textual accomplishment of coming to terms with the past. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 48, 337-355.

Tileagã, C. (2011) (Re)writing biography: Memory, identity and textually mediated reality in coming to terms with the past. *Culture & Psychology*, 17(2), 197-215.

Wood, D., Bruner, J.S. & Ross, G. (1975) The role of tutoring in problem solving. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 17, 89-100.

Wood, D. & Middleton, D. (1975) A study of assisted problem solving. *British Journal of Psychology*, 66(2), 181-191.