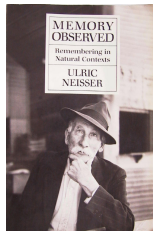


## How people use the past



1978

## Neisser's observation

- "If X is an interesting memory phenomenon, psychologists avoid it like the plague."

## Important idea #1

- Does "memory" in general exist?
  - It is known to be a holdover from a medieval psychology.
  - Shall we assume that the ancients guessed correctly about the classes of mental phenomena?
  - "In studying memory we do not know how to separate different kinds of cases. Indeed, we cannot even be sure whether any natural lines of demarcation exist."

## Important idea #2

- Ecological validity and representativeness
  - Naturalists and naturalistic observations
  - Ethology, upsets learning theory by showing that "learning" (as it was conceived in psychological theory) is not a useful category for understanding animal behavior
  - Esoteric tasks, puzzles, and the cultural process of finding good representations

## Neisser's attempt to change the category called "memory"

- How people use their own past experiences in meeting the present and the future under natural conditions.

## Our bigger issue

- Not just memory
- How people use their minds under natural conditions.

## Important Questions

- What is the purpose and nature of remembering?
- How do we remember?
- Why do we sometimes fail?
- Who remembers what and why?
- What do students remember of classes?
- Are there functionally different types of memory in everyday life? If so, what are they?

## Using the past to construct our selves

- Involuntary memories
- Recovered (or constructed) memories
- Memory of childhood experiences
- Cole's example "She won't be a rugby player" (prolepsis)

## Official remembering

- Eyewitness testimony (Elizabeth Loftus)
- Remembering history
- Flashbulb memories
- Kunagesa's memory for magic

## Kunagesa A magician from Okaiboma Village



## An ecological view

- Remembering as a skill
- Cultural practices as cognitive enzymes
  - We are good at remembering the information required for our skilled performances.

## Memory for an Everyday Object

## What does a penny look like?

- Get out a piece of paper
- Sketch the “heads” side of a penny from memory.

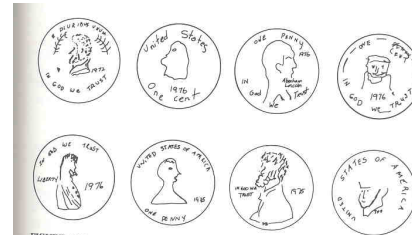


FIGURE 15-1  
Examples of drawings obtained from people who tried to reproduce a penny from memory.

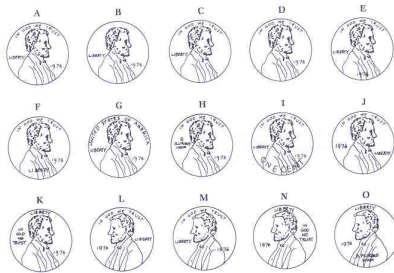


FIGURE 15-5  
The fifteen drawings of the top side of a penny that were used in Experiments IV and V. A brief characterization of each drawing is given in Table 15-3.

## The real deal



## It is not going to be easy.

- “The psychological laboratory is the easiest setting in which to work, but it is also among the least interesting”
- “The realistic study of memory is much harder than the work we have been accustomed to.”
- To find out about how people make use of the past in their everyday lives, we must look carefully at the everyday world.

## But we could do it with our cognitoscope

- If it was properly tuned.