

the report was published in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* in 1998.¹ The authors emphasised the lack of good research in the area, challenged the notion of the existence of 'robust repression' and alerted clinicians to the dangers of employing memory recovery techniques in their practice. The authors were particularly concerned about the memory of abuse after many years of apparent amnesia, pointing out that there is considerable evidence that such memories cannot be relied upon.

Sabbagh's remarkable book confirms the brave conclusions of the working group from more than 10 years ago, but it shows that we have come a long way in furthering the understanding of the fallibility of childhood memories since Brandon *et al's* publication. What makes this book so remarkable is that it takes the reader on a thought-provoking scientific journey through the development of memory from infancy to adulthood and illustrates the range of developmental, contextual and individual factors that may interfere with and contaminate the memory process. Not only does the author draw on the relevant published research, he also uses his skills as a documentary producer to complement this by providing fascinating accounts from interviews with many of

the leading memory researchers in the field. One of those interviewed is Elizabeth Loftus, whose work in the area of recovered memories resulted in a civil lawsuit being made against her by a disgruntled recovered memory 'victim' for alleged invasion of privacy and defamation after her university had cleared her of misconduct. Such are the controversies and emotional intensities inherent in this line of research that Loftus found herself defending her work, career and integrity in the California Supreme Court.

The book demonstrates well the bitter 'memory wars' among 'experts' and how the fallibility in belief systems is the key to understanding the development of recovered memories and its potential for miscarriage of justice.

- 1 Brandon S, Boakes J, Glaser D, Green R. Recovered memories of childhood sexual abuse. Implications for clinical practice. *Br J Psychiatry* 1998; **172**: 296–307.

Gisli Gudjonsson Institute of Psychiatry, King's College, Denmark Hill, London SE5 8AF. Email: g.gudjonsson@iop.kcl.ac.uk

doi: 10.1192/bjp.bp.109.064097

advances

in psychiatric treatment

Volume 15, Issue 6
November 2009
<http://apt.repsych.org>

CONTENTS

Editorial: Letter from America: acute in-patient psychiatry bed shortages

Steven S. Sharfstein

The role of the medical director in mental health

Neil Deuchar and Elizabeth Atkinson

Puerperal psychosis: identifying and caring for women at risk

Ian Jones and Sue Smith

Clinical significance of neurological abnormalities in psychosis

Marco M. Picchioni and Paola Dazzan

Understanding community care law in England and Wales *Danny Allen*

Self-harm in adolescents *Alison Wood*

Invited commentary: The challenges of managing self-harm effectively *Nisha Dogra*

Article 2 of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the treatment of prisoners

Martin Curtice and John Sandford

Clinical implications of neuropsychiatric systemic lupus erythematosus

Anselm Mak, Roger Chun Man Ho and Chak Sing Lau

Interpersonal dynamics and multidisciplinary teamwork

David Reiss and Gabriel Kirtchuk

Systemic thinking and values-based practice *Gwen Adshead*

Mindreadings: *Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka *Allan Beveridge*

For further information on
subscribing to this journal
please contact:

Subscriptions Dept,
Maney Publishing,
Suite 1c, Joseph's Well,
Hanover Walk, LEEDS
LS3 1AB, UK.

Tel: +44 (0)113 243 2800.

Fax: +44 (0)113 386 8178.

Email:
subscriptions@maney.co.uk

Order online:
www.maney.co.uk

For US orders:

Maney Publishing North
America,
875 Massachusetts Avenue,
7th Floor, Cambridge,
MA 02139, USA.
Tel: 866 297 5154 (toll free).
Fax: +1 617 354 6875.

Email:
maney@maneyusa.com