

MICHAEL S. GAZZANIGA
“The Mind’s Past” 1998



“Biography is fiction. Autobiography is hopelessly inventive.” p. 2
“I like false memories. Some of my best memories are false, I am sure.” p. 141

“[In the left-hemisphere, functioning without our awareness, there is an] . . . interpreter that constructs theories to assimilate perceived information into a comprehensive whole. In so doing, however, the elaborative processing has a deleterious effect on the accuracy of reconstructing the past.” p 26

“In order to convince someone else of the truth of our story [and what we tell others about who we are] we have to convince ourselves. We need something that expands the actual facts of our experience into an ongoing narrative, the self-image we have been building in our mind for years. The spin doctoring that goes on keeps us believing we are good people, that we are in control and mean to do good. It is probably the most amazing mechanism the human being possesses.” p 26-27

“Our brains are built to remember the gist of things, not the details. It is as if our memory system can get us into the areas of a past event, but it can’t recall the details of the event with much accuracy. Yet we frequently go on and on about the details as if we truly remember them. . . The interpreter and the memory system meet in these false recollections. As we spin our tale, calling on the large items for the schema of our past memory, we simply drag into the account likely details that could have been part of the experience. Such easily disprovable fabrications go on all the time.” P 142.