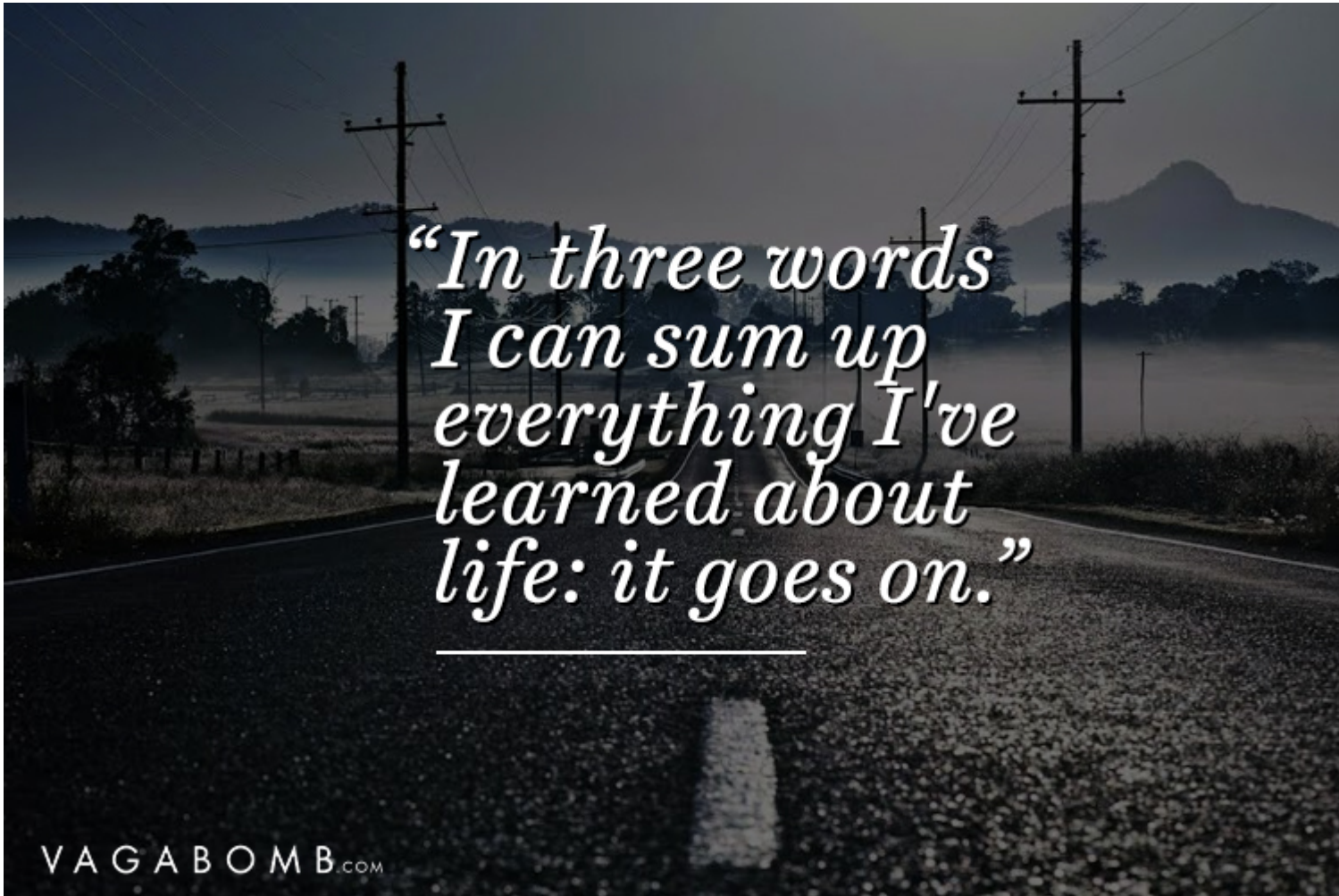


TECHNOSPHERE: AN ARTIFICIALLY MEMORY-BOOSTING SYSTEM

Description



It is a tragedy that the technosphere, as an artificially memory-boosting system, has become the 'biosphere' of modern man

"The man with a clear conscience probably has a poor memory."
~ JAMES BRANCH CABELL

"A liar needs a good memory." ~ Marcus Quintilianus

"He has left off reading altogether, to the great improvement of his originality." ~ CHARLES LAMB (1775-1834)

“If you tell the truth, you don’t have to remember anything.” ~ MARK TWAIN

“The multitude of books is making us ignorant.”~ VOLTAIRE, FRANCOIS MARIE AROUET (1694-1778)

“The advantage of a bad memory is that one enjoys several times the same good things for the first time”. ~ FRIEDRICK NIETZSCHE (1844-1900)

Man forgets, machine remembers; man lives, machine repeats; man creates, machines duplicates. Thus what machine does is just the mechanical duplication of what man does. Therefore all memory-boosting techniques are essentially wars against the natural process of forgetting. Modern science and mechanical systems, unlike Nature, are totally based and dependent on the success of artificially memory boosting process.

What is a computer? Its basic function is to remember – just artificially, smartly and unconsciously. The more advanced and sophisticated a computer is the more efficiently and more quantitatively it remembers. Its memory is millions of times more than that of man – both in quantity and speed.

How is the mind which functions on knowledge – how is the brain which is recording all the time – to end, to see the importance of recording and not let it move in any other direction?

Very simply: you insult me, you hurt me, by word, gesture, by an actual act; that leaves a mark on the brain which is memory. That memory is knowledge, that knowledge is going to interfere in my meeting you next time – obviously. Knowledge is necessary to act in the sense of my going home from here to the place I live; I must have knowledge for this; I must have knowledge to speak English; I must have knowledge to write a letter and so on and thus for knowledge for all sorts mechanical function, is necessary. And thus memory boosting has become basic to the mechanization of human society.

Now if I use that knowledge in my relationship with you, another human being, I am bringing about a barrier, a division between you and me, namely the observer. That is, knowledge, in relationship, in human relationship, is destructive. That is knowledge which is the tradition, the memory, the image, which the mind has built about you, that knowledge is separative and therefore creates conflict in our relationship.

“Memory obsession is the basic malady” was how the Indian popular daily, *The Hindu*, concluded its feature on modern education which it says is being reduced to meaningless rituals mainly due to commercialisation of the modern cognition process which we call education. But the basic purpose of the real cognition process – wisdom process – demands just a reverse inspiration: “Education is what survives when what has been learned has been forgotten”, wrote B. F. Skinner.

“To be wronged is nothing unless you continue to remember”, Confucius taught in 5th century BC. Man of the jungle was happier, for he had no techniques to remember, and thus he had less baggage of the past to carry on. “Happiness? That is nothing more than health and poor memory”, observed Albert Schweitzer. We usually say that the great-

heartedness and great minds always forget and forgive. But the narrow minded, the soulless mechanical minds, the machines, never forget nor forgive. "Revenge is the poor delight of the little minds", Juvenile writes. Self-forgetfulness or self-denouncement or self-sacrifice was the high mark of heroism, high-mindedness, nobleness and loftiness which our distant forefathers, sages and ancient leaders had in abundance and which the modern man of high expertise lacks.

Forgetting and remembering are evolutionary, humane and natural. Over-forgetting is an unnatural and an evolutionary defect as is over-remembering. With the advent of writing, then printing, again photo and now video and computer, we only indulge in over-remembering; thereby the unnatural part – the evolutionary defective part – went on developing and expanding. With the introduction of computer, this abnormality or perversion suddenly turned the table on all pious calculations so much that everything natural and organic changed. This defective process however remained beyond natural perception or recognition. Today machines and fictions rule the roost, and have become the only new virtuality eclipsing all natural realities.

"To err is human, to forgive is divine", wrote Holmqvist (1991, p. 173). But in our day modern science is indeed blocking even God to do His duties. Today what we call the history may be termed as a war of attrition between the natural process of forgetting and the mechanical process of over-remembering that has reached over millions of times more than the normal natural process. The mechanical boost of over-remembering only helped the shrewd and the meanest, namely the specialist, the professional or the scientist to 'discover' and 'invent' with the help of books, charts, surveys, photos, mathematics and today computers. It is the development of techniques of *reflection* that enabled man to begin writing 'his-story.' "History is the science of man," Jose Orteg wrote. But what is science? As science progressed through symbols, languages, artificial languages, mathematics, printing, photos, computers and satellites, it is only the process of reflection or duplication that are getting magnified to its millions of time folds, together with the duplication and magnification of human power – mainly for destruction – from gun powder to nuclear bomb. Hence the era of modern science may be termed as the history of modern techniques of mechanical memory boosting, or the history of anti-natural development of man.

Science, as we have seen, is the arrested brain of human intelligence. It may be as old as man himself. But the accumulation of various past intelligence, with lots of errors by way of human inability to comprehend them, artificial knowledge process started to grow to thousands of times bigger in dimension than anything for the bare normal natural human's live intelligence to perceive or follow. Its propriety, utility or even its dangerous portents are all philosophical questions. Man lived for hundreds of thousands of years with his normal and natural remembering capabilities largely till the Middle Ages.

The Greek treatise of science which lay hidden in the hands of Arabs was available to the West from Arab sources towards the end of medieval ages. It was this Greek treatise which helped – along with some added tricks – to erect what we have as modern science today. World certainly would have been a different – indeed a far better – place to live if had they been lost permanently, or Francis Bacon who is broadly known as the Father of Modern Science had not reversed the theretofore intellectual methodology from *deduction* to *induction*.

Later in the 17th century, Rousseau wrote: "Consider the frightful disorders which *printing* has produced in Europe. Wherever 'philosophy' (science at that time was referred to as philosophy) arises, the moral health of the nation decays. There was even a saying amongst

the philosophers themselves that since learned men had appeared, honest men were nowhere to be found. I venture to declare that a state of *reflection* is contrary to Nature; and a thinking man is a depraved animal.” Rousseau wrote in his essay as an answer on the question, “has the progress of the Sciences and the Arts contributed to corrupt or purify morals?” Rousseau won the prize in 1749 from the Academy of Dijon for his brilliant answer on the negative. He added, “it would be better to abandon our over rapid development of the intellect, and to aim rather at training the heart and the affections. Education does not make a man good; it only makes him clever – usually for mischief. Instinct and feeling are more trustworthy than reason.”

In the beginning, only priests and merchants patronized writing and languages. Writing is the art of civilization. However, very many cultures with a rich language and a traditional mythology have no written language. It is possible to construct a written language for such people and to provide them with books. This was first done by Christian missionaries and has recently been done on a wide scale for formerly ‘illiterate’ peoples in several regions of the world.

Writing has its early association with temples, which, with their priests, were of the greatest importance in the early centuries of Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilization and the whole of the eastern culture. The priests formed permanent colleges or corporations, accumulating power and property, and engaged in economic enterprise. They organized schools, which were provided with scripts and copybooks. At first confined to the servants of the temple, the art of writing soon spread outside the temple walls; and when the monopoly on writing disappeared, the reins of temporal power began to pass from priestly hands.

The earliest writing is not very interesting from a literary point of view. It is almost entirely commercial or consists of lists of cities and of inventories of materials. Its origin lay in the necessities of accountancy rather than in any aspirations of human spirit.

With rationalism ruling the roost, philosophy emerged more of an art in science during the 17th and 18th century, and hence Rousseau’s despise for philosophy and intellectualism of his age. Modern age is not different, if not worse. (Chapter 12: *PROFESSIONALISM*)

Man lives by his conscience; he can neither succeed living in the past nor wait for his innings in future. Future belongs to his future conscience. Our finding fault with the past is as erroneous as our inability to cope with the present. Modern man looks to history for solving his problem. His scientific methodology tends to collect facts or data. He surveys past events as basis for studying similar problems and for arriving at his conclusion and solutions. But as history does not repeat, to depend on this methodology is as foolish as to expect the dead to come alive.

And this being the case with real history in which events with all their environments and circumstances are intact and true, our dependence on fragile histories, histories full of defects and fakes, the story is more pathetic.

When we take life as it comes, we go natural and act according to our desires. Our natural minds can perform feats that powerful mechanical memory boosters are unable to perform. Hence, a layman is right, certainly more than an expert or professional.

All sorts of man-made symbols like languages, printing, photo, video, computer etc., as tools of modern science, are basically the tools or shortcuts methods to smartly and artificially overturn the natural process of forgetting and thus to circumvent the natural,

normal evolutionary process. A man who habitually keeps looking at the photo of his long lost baby boy, who has left home, say, some 20 years ago, will always feel that his son is still a child and not a grown up man. Similarly a whole people permanently fed on the grandeur of Plato and Shakespeare (Western philosophies are all footnotes to Plato) cannot grow beyond the images of these purported great men painted in linear symbols. That is why people still regard 'old as gold' and these men far greater than us, which of course they really are in the given today's environment of non-growth. The fault is with the present man who does not grow by over remembering the past. The vast difference between the developments of this artificial truth and the natural truth can be noticed if we compare modern man of science and a man of the jungle (tribal, for example) who is untouched by modern science (colonialism and globalization, however, has left nobody on Earth untouched or unspoiled). While the former may possess billion knots of memory power with his high-tech gadgets, the latter may have only the 'limited' memory of an ordinary natural man. But while the mind of the former is filled with all sorts of details and symbols, both past, distant past and present, in minute details among which he may forget to remember the necessary from the unnecessary, the relevant from the irrelevant and the good from the evil as per his present circumstances, for which he always has to depend on machines.

Overloaded, the mind of modern man naturally becomes acidic and therefore obese, whereas the man of the jungle, by remaining fresh, will fairly have a complete control over his environment and circumstances. He will have a far better presence of mind and can easily and personally discard the irrelevant, the unnecessary and the evils, and he only lives in his present, unlike the experts and professionals and their dependents who always try to live the present in speculation of a 'bright and profitable' tomorrow that never comes.

A mechanically boosted memory is like a big store house full of materials – used and unused, necessary and unnecessary, important and unimportant, big and small, past and present. Processing them requires scores of clerks. Here decay or recycling does not occur mainly due to better synthetic 'warehousing' techniques, and by spraying toxic insecticides. No human can take up this task. Here the vested interest, the market, can present and sell to the world the unimportant as important, the irrelevant as relevant, the useless as useful, the past as present – by adding all sorts of special effects as marketing techniques.

Likewise, the market controlled roller-coaster, memory booster techniques always tell us and sell us the unrelated as related, the unimportant as important, the useless as useful, the past as present etc. For, individually, modern man is unable to remember and distinguish things surrounded by the heaps of millions in the mechanical memory lane in a highly compartmentalized world. As a 'social animal', modern man suffers because of the heavy load of the parasitic social decadents – degenerated systems like religion, government, mechanical social systems etc., that, as superficial packages, have been soaking his infosphere since long. He does not undergo any periodic sloughing or shedding of his long degenerated systems like religion, government, mechanical social systems etc. No wonder, we often lament that public memory is too short, that it often goes wrong.

Every tool or system made by man is not supposed to outlive him, the creator. Man will benefit most if he can, like some reptiles shed their skin (a process known as sloughing that makes these snakes medicinal), get rid of these parasitic and degenerated systems. Man lived for millions of years without these heavy load of mechanical systems and thus faced no catastrophic problems that threatened his extinction, nothing like the case today. In our day, with exploding information revolutions ruling the roost, man has been reduced to be the slave of his own system. Man simply cannot afford to forget his past; he is bound to 'follow' other people and the world – just mechanically. (More on this discussed under the heading '*How does decadence continue building on itself in modern age?*' in Chapter 10).

Man forgets and forgives; machines (computers) never. Once a criminal in the American police dossiers – fully computerized – he remains a criminal in his lifetime, as are the 'erring' nations and intellectuals on the dossiers of CIA and the erstwhile KGB. And, now, when history is being made at the speed of light inside today's computers, and thereby shaping our collective destiny, man can only remain spellbound and thunderstruck.

Computers will remain a force to reckon with. It will be the most effective tool of exploitation till diversity becomes zero or there is complete mechanization of the universe. The computers have suddenly become giant 'information lords' and 'media moguls', with their exclusive ownership of high-tech memory boosting and information dissemination technology. Now latest generation super computers have become "emperors" of post-modern society.

Even the American and French revolutions would have been easily thwarted had computer made an appearance in the mid-18th century contradiction-ridden America and France. The British and the French authorities then would have been able to maintain dossiers of dissidents and rebels. They would have even been able to provide food to the selected hungry as well as taken into custody a few trouble shooters at that time to stem the tide of protest in the bud and thus by maintaining proper records in those troubled times.

The unbridled growth of synthetic thought processes (analytical and reductionist philosophy) eclipsed the natural thought processes (generalizing philosophy) which resulted in the sectarian growth of great interference to Nature's logic. Thoughts of Charles Darwin, Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud are examples of such sectarian growth of analytical philosophy. Freud suddenly started to see 'disorder' in Nature's order, namely, forgetting. Memory which already got an artificial boost with the advent of printing, photography and motion pictures also received an additional boost with the introduction of psycho-analysis by Freud.

The word machine implies mindless activity. A car, lathe, or computer only does what humans program it to do. Employment of sensors and guidance systems has allowed some machines to exhibit seemingly intelligent behaviors. An airplane can be programmed to take off in Los Angeles and land in New York without human involvement. The man-made program is executed correctly and gives the impression that the airplane thinks. The computer does not think. The computer is just another dumb machine although it is more complex than other machines are and has a rich range.

Computers are man-made machines. As such, they have been designed to perform repetitive functions. Living things are not designed to last unchanged a lifetime. Living bodies interact with environment and adjust to it. Furry animals shed their coats in the summer and grow more hair in the winter. A crab sheds its protective shell when it becomes small and grows a new one. A shark loses its teeth and replaces them with a new set. A

lizard loses its tail and grows a new one. A polar bear has developed a special fur to negotiate the cold environment of the Arctic ocean. A seal insulates itself with extra blubber. A tree in a hot climate moves its leaves vertically or shed its leaves to reduce evaporation. All living things respond to their surroundings, change their 'mental strategies', and also modify their bodies. The reason for these abilities is that living organisms are not only biological machines, but also manufacturing plants that support reproduction, maintenance, and remodeling of the organisms in response to environmental effects. No man-made machine can do this.

The brain has practically oriented faculties. The brain does not need to perform countless repetitive operations or to gather billions of statistical data as computers do. Asking the brain to do so for the purpose of comparing the brain versus a computer is a senseless exercise. Only a computer is capable of finding that the Milky Way has about 100 billion stars.

Perils of mechanical remembering: Forgetting or resting or sleeping is the law of Nature. Everything in Nature, including man, sleeps, takes rest or forgets for varying intervals. Sleeping or taking rest or forgetting refreshes man and prepares man for better health and growth to newer evolutionary stages in life. However, it is seen that most of the man-made systems and machines do not rest. They are unable to forget and that results in stagnation. These machines are the tools of remembering the past that encourage only their replications. By becoming the tool of his own tool, modern man too has become an object of remembering, rendering him restless and thus unable to progress to newer evolutionary stages of life. For millions of years, man had no tool or systems to promote remembering, like the modern development of printing and photography. Hence, in the past, human life too did not merely repeat but creatively evolved to newer and higher life forms that made man the crown of all creations.

Remembering mechanically evokes biochemical change in brain and heavy load of remembering renders man just a mechanical being. A sign/symbol of remembering is not necessarily a 'physical stimulus,' but can evoke a bio-chemical change in the brain that is then translated into a linguistic statement. Now the 'meaning' of the sign/symbol has obviously been stored in memory as a 'mental image,' but the 'remembering' of this image is triggered by the sign/symbol. Thus modern man is out of touch with the reality of Nature, he lives in the world of collective obsession, the world of systems and fictions with which modern man has surrounded himself.

Boosted memory renders modern mind acidic and obese: Just the same as the accumulation of de-mineralized and non-nutritious and other unnatural fast foods make the body acidic and obese, the accumulation of artificially boosted memory (linear and deprived of conscience) too renders human mind acidic and, therefore, obese.

The same scientific brain that led to the development of medicine prosaic is now creating made-to-order, off-the-shelf personalities. For good or for evil, research that once mapped the frontiers of disease – identifying the brain chemistry involved in depression, paranoia, and schizophrenia – is today throttling the chemistry of normal personality. As a result, researchers are on the verge of 'chemical attempts to modify character.' Neuro-psychiatrist Richard Restak writes in *Receptors*, "For the first time in human history, we will be in a position to design our own brain, enriching its usual memory, enhancing intelligence, heightening concentration etc."

"If someone takes a drug everyday for four years because it makes him feel or work better, something may happen that we don't know about", warns psychiatrist Solomon Snyder of

John Hopkins University.

Side effects of prosaic is reported to have caused nausea, diarrhoea, loss of sexual functions, headache, constipation, weight gain, dreadful surge in blood pressure, fatigue and dizziness according to a report in *Newsweek*.

Normal forgetting helps every species to rise from lower to higher, on the evolutionary ladder, thereby increasing its abilities in adjusting to new realities and new environments. Recording of all artificial, anti-forgetting techniques only help the reactions which only help professionals and the cunning to do the one-up game plan.

What Freud did was no different. He showed the 'magic' behind the artificial process of remembering and that only interfered with the natural process of forgetting, thereby blocking the natural development – from lower to higher order stage. It only helped man from 'disorder' to seeming 'order', from imperfection to seeming perfection, from discomfort to seeming comfort, all of which were soon to disappear when man is taken out of the mechanical environment as is the condition of a person coming out of an air-conditioned theatre on a hot summer day.

Our paramount failure or drawback is our inability to eliminate the garbage, the unwanted, the irrelevant, the decay, all of which have accumulated to mountainous proportions in our memory and thereby overwhelming the mind/brain and, thus, leaving no room for anything new, fresh, relevant and essential to enter our memory. This has made the mind of modern man and modern society acidic and thus obese. Modern man is so suffocated by garbage (pollution) of both the physical and mental varieties that he in fact gasps for everything new and fresh. That leaves him barren and passive everywhere.

No wonder we often look to the past and refer to it as the 'good old days'.

Category

- Uncategorized

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