

Break, Memory

By

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### The Evolution of the Problem

The problem was not that people couldn't remember; the problem was that people couldn't forget.

As far back as the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we realized that socio-historical problems were best handled on a macro level. It was inefficient to work on individuals who were, after all, nothing but birds in digital cages. Move the cage, move the birds. The challenge was to build the cage big enough to create an illusion of freedom in flight but small enough to be moved easily.

When long-term collective memory became a problem in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it wound up on my desktop. There had always been a potential for individuals to connect the dots and cause a contextual shift. We managed the collective as best we could with Chomsky Chutes but an event could break out randomly at any time like a bubble bursting. As much as we surveil the social landscape with sensors and datamine for deep patterns, we can't catch everything. It's all sensors and statistics, after all, which have limits. If a phenomenon gets sticky or achieves critical mass, it can explode through any interface, even create the interface it needs at the moment of explosion. That can gum up the works.

Remembering and forgetting changed after writing was invented. The ones that remembered best had always won. Writing shifted the advantage from those who knew to those who knew how to find what was known. Electronic communication shifted the advantage once again to those who knew what they didn't need to know but knew how to get it when they did. In the twentieth century advances in pharmacology and genetic engineering increased longevity dramatically and at the same time meaningful distinctions between backward and forward societies disappeared so far as health care was concerned. The population exploded everywhere simultaneously.

People who had retired in their sixties could look forward to sixty or seventy more years of healthful living. As usual, the anticipated problems – overcrowding, scarce water and food, employment for those who wanted it – were not the big issues.

Crowding was managed by staggered living, generating niches in many multiples of what used to be daylight single-sided life. Life became double-sided, then triple-sided, and so on. Like early memory storage devices that packed magnetic media inside other media, squeezing them into every bit of available space, we designed multiple niches in society that allowed people to live next to one another in densely packed communities without even noticing their neighbors. Oh, people were vaguely aware that thousands of others were on the streets or in stadiums, but they might as well have been simulants for all the difference they made. We call this the Second Neolithic, the emergence of specialization at the next level squared.

The antisocial challenges posed by hackers who “flipped” through niches for weeks at a time, staying awake on Perkup, or criminals exploiting flaws inevitably

present in any new system, were anticipated and handled using risk management algorithms. In short, multisided life works.

Genetic engineering provided plenty of food and water. Binderhoff Day commemorates the day that water was recycled from sewage using the Binderhoff Method. A body barely relinquishes its liquid before it's back in a glass in its hand. As to food, the management of fads enables us to play musical chairs with agri-resources, smoothing the distribution curve.

Lastly, people are easy to keep busy. Serial careers, marriages and identities have been pretty much standard since the twentieth century. Trends in that direction continued at incremental rather than tipping-point levels. We knew within statistical limits when too many transitions would cause a problem, jamming intersections as it were with too many vehicles, so we licensed relationships, work-terms, and personal reinvention using traffic management algorithms to control the social flow.

By the twenty-first century, everybody's needs were met. Ninety-eight per cent of everything bought and sold was just plain made up. Once we started a fad, it tended to stay in motion, generating its own momentum. People spent much of their time exchanging goods and services that an objective observer might have thought useless or unnecessary, but of course, there was no such thing as an objective observer. Objectivity requires distance, historical perspective, exactly what is lacking. Every product or service introduced into the marketplace drags in its wake an army of workers to manufacture it, support it, or clean up after it which swells the stream until it becomes a river. All of those rivers flow into the sea but the sea is never full.

Fantasy baseball is a good example. It had long been noticed that baseball itself, once the sport became digitized, was a simulation. Team names were made up for as many teams as the population would watch. Players for those teams were swapped back and forth so the team name was obviously arbitrary, requiring the projection of a “team gestalt” from loyal fans pretending not to notice that they booed players they had cheered as heroes the year before. Even when fans were physically present at games, the experience was mediated through digital filters; one watched or listened to digital simulations instead of the game itself, which existed increasingly on the edges of the field of perception. Then the baseball strike of 2012 triggered the Great Realization. The strike was on for forty-two days before anyone noticed the absence of flesh-and-blood players because the owners substituted players made of pixels. Game Boys created game boys. Fantasy baseball had invented itself in recognition that fans might as well swap virtual players and make up teams too but the G.R. took it to the next level. After the strike, Double Fantasy Baseball became an industry, nested like a Russian doll inside Original Fantasy Baseball. Leagues of fantasy players were swapped in meta-leagues of fantasy players. Then Triple Fantasy Baseball ... Quadruple Fantasy Baseball ... and now the fad is Twelves in baseball football and whack-it-ball and I understand that Lucky Thirteens is on the drawing boards, bigger and better than any of its predecessors.

So no, there is no shortage of arbitrary activities or useless goods. EBay was the prototype of the future, turning the world into one gigantic swap meet. If we need a police action or a new professional sport to bleed off excess hostility or rebalance the body politic, we make it up. The Hump in the Bell Curve as we call the eighty per cent that buy and sell just about everything swim blissfully in the currents of make-believe

digital rivers, all unassuming. They call it the Pursuit of Happiness. And hey – who are we to argue?

The memory-longevity problem came as usual completely out of fantasy left field. People were living three, four, five generations, as we used to count generations, and vividly recalled the events of their personal histories. Pharmacological assists and genetic enhancement made the problem worse by quickening recall and ending dementia and Alzheimer's. I don't mean that every single person remembered every single thing but the Hump as a whole had pretty good recall of its collective history and that's what mattered. Peer-to-peer communication means one-knows-everyone-knows and that created problems for society in general and – as a Master of Society – that makes it my business.

My name is Horicon Walsh, if you hadn't guessed, and I lead the team that designs the protocols of society. I am the man behind the Master. I am the Master behind the Plan.

### The Philosophical Basis of the Problem

The philosophical touchstone of our efforts was defined in nineteenth century America. The only question that matters is, What good is it? Questions like, what is its nature? what is its end? are irrelevant.

Take manic depression, for example. Four per cent of the naturally occurring population were manic depressive in the late twentieth century. The pharmacological fix applied to the anxious or depressive one-third of the Hump attempted to maintain a

steady internal state, not too high and not too low. That standard of equilibrium was accepted without question as a benchmark for fixing manic depression. Once we got the chemistry right, the people who had swung between killing themselves and weeks of incredibly productive, often genius-level activity were tamped down in the bowl, as it were, their glowing embers a mere reflection of the fire that had once burned so brightly. Evolution, in other words, had gotten it right because their good days – viewed from the top of the tent – made up for their bad days. Losing a few to suicide was no more consequential than a few soccer fans getting trampled. Believing that the Golden Mean worked on the individual as well as the macro level, we got it all wrong.

That sort of mistake, fixing things according to unexamined assumptions, happened all the time when we started tweaking things. Too many dumb but athletic children spoiled the broth. Too many waddling bespectacled geeks made it too acrid. Too many willowy beauties made it too salty. Peaks and valleys, that's what we call the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as we let people design their own progeny. The feedback loops inside society kind of worked – we didn't kill ourselves – but clearly we needed to be more aware. Regulation was obviously necessary and subsequently all genetic alteration and pharmacological enhancements were cross-referenced in a matrix calibrated to the happiness of the Hump. Executing the Plan to make it all work was our responsibility, a charge that the ten per cent of us called Masters gladly accepted. The ten per cent destined to be dregs, spending their lives picking through dumpsters and arguing loudly with themselves in loopy monologues, serve as grim reminders of what humanity would be without our enlightened guidance.

That's the context in which it became clear that everybody remembering everything was a problem. The Nostalgia Riots of Greater Florida were only a symptom.

### The Nostalgia Riots

Here you had the fat tip of a long peninsular state packed like a water balloon with millions of people well into their hundreds. One third of the population was 150 or older by 2175. Some remembered sixteen major wars and dozens of skirmishes and police actions. Some had lived through forty-six recessions and recoveries. Some had lived through so many elections they could have written the scripts, that's how bad it was. Their thoughtful reflection, nuanced perspective, and appropriate skepticism were a blight on a well-managed global free-market democracy. They did not get depressed – pharmies in the food and water made sure of that – but they sure acted like depressed people even if they didn't feel like it. And depressed people tend to get angry.

West Floridians lined benches from Key West through Tampa Bay all the way to the Panhandle. The view from satellites when they lighted matches one night in midwinter to demonstrate their power shows an unbroken arc along the edge of the water like a second beach beside the darker beach. All day every day they sat there remembering, comparing notes, measuring what was happening now by what had happened before. They put together pieces of the historical puzzle the way people used to do crosswords and we had to work overtime to stay a step ahead. The long view of the

Elder Sub-Hump undermined satisfaction with the present. They preferred a different, less helpful way of looking at things.

When the drums of the Department of System Integration, formerly the Managed Affairs and Perception Office, began to beat loudly to rouse the population of our crowded earth to a fury against the revolutionary Martian colonists who shot their resupplies into space rather than pay taxes to the earth, we thought we would have the support of the Elder Sub-Hump. Instead they pushed the drumming into the background and recalled through numerous conversations the details of past conflicts, creating a memory net that destabilized the official Net. Their case for why our effort was doomed was air-tight, but that wasn't the problem. We didn't mind the truth being out there so long as no one connected it to the present. The problem was that so many people knew it because the Elder Sub-Hump wouldn't shut up. That created a precedent and the precedent was the problem.

Long-term memory, we realized, was subversive of the body politic.

Where had we gotten off course? We had led the culture to skew toward youth because youth have no memory in essence, no context for judging anything. Their righteousness is in proportion to their ignorance, as it should be. But the Elder Sub-Hump skewed that skew.

We launched a campaign against the seditious seniors. Because there were so many of them, we had to use ridicule. The three legs of the stool of cover and deception operations are illusion, misdirection, and ridicule, but the greatest of these is ridicule. When the enemy is in plain sight, you have to make him look absurd so everything he says is discredited. The UFO Campaign of the twentieth century is the textbook example

of that strategy. You had fighter pilots, commercial pilots, credible citizens all reporting the same thing from all over the world, their reports agreeing over many decades in the small details. So ordinary citizens were subjected to ridicule. The use of government owned and influenced media like newspapers (including agency-owned-and-operated tabloids) and television networks made people afraid to say what they saw. They came to disbelieve their own eyes so the phenomena could hide in plain sight. Pretty soon no one saw it. Even people burned by close encounters refused to believe in their own experience and accepted official explanations.

We did everything possible to make old people look ridiculous. Subtle images of drooling fools were inserted into news stories, short features showed ancients playing inanely with their pets, the testimony of confused seniors was routinely dismissed in courts of law. Our trump card – entertainment – celebrated youth and its lack of perspective, extolling the beauty of young muscular bodies in contrast with sagging-skin bags of bones who paused too long before they spoke. We turned the book industry inside out so the little bit that people did know was ever more superficial. The standard for excellence in publishing became an absence of meaningful text, massive amounts of white space, and large fonts. Originality dimmed, and pretty soon the only books that sold well were mini-books of aphorisms promulgated by pseudo-gurus each in his or her self-generated niche.

Slowly the cognitive functioning of the Hump degraded until abstract or creative thought became marks of the wacky, the outcast, and the impotent.

Then the unexpected happened, as it always will. Despite our efforts, the Nostalgia Riots broke out one hot and steamy summer day. Govvies moved on South

Florida with happy gas, trying to turn the rampaging populace into one big smiley face, but the seniors went berserk before the gas – on top of pills, mind you, chemicals in the water, and soporific stories in the media – took effect. They tore up benches from the Everglades to Tampa/St. Pete and made bonfires that made the forest fires of '64 look like fireflies. They smashed store windows, burned hovers, and looted amusement parks along the Hundred-Mile-Boardwalk. Although the Youthful Sub-Hump was slow to get on board, they burned white-hot when they finally ignited, racing through their shopping worlds with inhuman cold-blooded cries. A shiver of primordial terror chilled the Hump from end to end.

That a riot broke out was not the primary problem. Riots will happen and serve many good purposes. They enable us to reinforce stereotypes, enact desirable legislation, and discharge unhelpful energies. The way we frame analyses of their causes become antecedents for future policies and police actions. We have sponsored or facilitated many a useful riot. No, the problem was that the elders' arguments were based on past events and if anybody listened, they made sense. That's what tipped the balance. Youth who had learned to ignore and disrespect their elders actually listened to what they were saying. Pretending to think things through became a fad. The young sat on quasi-elder-benches from Key Largo to Saint Augustine, pretending to have thoughtful conversations about the old days. Coffee shops came back into vogue. Lingering became fashionable again. Earth had long ago decided to back down when the Martians declared independence, so it wasn't that. It was the spectacle of the elderly strutting their stuff in a victory parade that stretched from Miami Beach to Biloxi that imaged a future we could not abide.

Even before the march, we were working on solving the problem. Let them win the battle. Martians winning independence, old folks feeling their oats, those weren't the issues. How policy was determined was the issue. Our long-term strategy focused on winning that war.

### Beyond the Chomsky Chutes

The first thing we did was review the efficacy of Chomsky Chutes.

Chomsky Chutes are the various means by which current events are dumped into the memory hole, never to be remembered again. Intentional forgetting is an art. We used distraction, misdirection – massive, minimal and everything in-between, truth-in-lie-embedding, lie-in-truth-embedding, bogus fronts and false organizations (physical, simulated, live and on the Net). We created events wholesale (which some call short-term memory crowding, a species of buffer overflow), generated fads, fashions and movements sustained by concepts that changed the context of debate. Over in the entertainment wing, the most potent wing of the military-industrial-educational-entertainment complex, we invented false people, characters with made-up life stories in simulated communities more real to the Hump than family or friends. We revised historical antecedents or replaced them entirely with narratives you could track through several centuries of buried made-up clues. We sponsored scholars to pursue those clues and published their works and turned them into minipics. Some won Nobel Prizes. We invented Net discussion groups and took all sides, injecting half-true details into the

discourse, just enough to bend the light. We excelled in the parallax view. We perfected the Gary Webb Gambit, using attacks by respectable media giants on independent dissenters, taking issue with things they never said, thus changing the terms of the argument and destroying their credibility. We created dummy dupes, substitute generals and politicians and dictators that looked like the originals in videos, newscasts, on the Net, in covertly distributed underground snaps, many of them pornographic. We created simulated humans and sent them out to play among their more real cousins. We used holographic projections, multispectral camouflage, simulated environments and many other stratagems. The toolbox of deception is bottomless and if anyone challenged us, we called them a conspiracy theorist and leaked details of their personal lives. It's pretty tough to be taken seriously when your words are juxtaposed with a picture of you sucking some prostitute's toes. Through all this we supported and often invented opposition groups because discordant voices, woven like a counterpoint into a fugue, showed the world that democracy worked. Meanwhile we used those groups to gather names, filling cells first in databases, then in Guantanamo camps.

Chomsky Chutes worked well when the management of perception was at top-level, the level of concepts. They worked perfectly before chemicals, genetic-enhancements and bodymods had become ubiquitous. Then the balance tipped toward chemicals (both ingested and inside-engineered) and we saw that macro strategies that addressed only the conceptual level let too many percepts slip inside. Those percepts swim around like sperm and pattern into memories; when memories are spread through peer-to-peer nets, the effect can be devastating. It counters everything we do at the macro level and creates a subjective field of interpretation that resists socialization, a cognitively

dissonant realm that's like an itch you can't scratch, a shadow world where "truths" as they call them are exchanged on the Black Market. Those truths can be woven together to create alternative realities. The only alternative realities we want out there are ones we create ourselves.

We saw that we needed to manage perception as well as conception. Given that implants, enhancements, and mods were altering human identity through everyday life – routine medical procedures, prenatal and geriatric care, plastic surgery, eye ear nose throat and dental work, all kinds of pharmacopsychotherapies – we saw the road we had to take. We needed to change the brain and its secondary systems so that percepts would filter in and filter out as we preferred. Percepts – not all, but enough – would be pre-configured to model or not model images consistent with society's goals.

Using our expertise in enterprise system programming and management, we correlated subtle changes in biochemistry and nanophysiology to a macro plan calibrated to statistical parameters of happiness in the Hump. Keeping society inside those "happy brackets" became our priority.

So long as changes are incremental, people don't notice. Take corrective lenses, for example. People think that what they see through lenses is what's "real" and are trained to call what their eyes see naturally (if they are myopic, for example) a blur. In fact, it's the other way around. The eyes see what's natural and the lenses create a simulation. Over time people think that percepts mediated by technological enhancements are "real" and what they experience without enhancements is distorted.

It's like that, only inside where it's invisible.

It was simply a matter of working not only on electromechanical impulses of the heart, muscles, and so on as we already did or on altering senses like hearing and sight as we already did or on implanting devices that assisted locomotion, digestion, and elimination as we already did but of working directly as well on the electrochemical wetware called the memory skein or membrane, that vast complex network of hormonal systems and firing neurons where memories and therefore identity reside. Memories are merely points of reference, after all, for who we think we are and therefore how we frame ourselves as possibilities for action. All individuals have mythic histories and collective memories are nothing but shared myths. Determining those points of reference determines what is thinkable at every level of society's mind.

Most of the trial and error work had been done by evolution. Our task was to infer which paths had been taken and why, then replicate them for our own ends.

Short term memory, for example, is wiped out when a crisis occurs. Apparently whatever is happening in a bland sort of ho-hum way when a tiger attacks is of little relevance to survival. But reacting to the crisis is important, so we ported that awareness to the realm of the body politic. Everyday life has its minor crises but pretty much just perks along. We adjusted our sensors to alert us earlier when the Hump was paying too much attention to some event that might achieve momentum or critical mass; then we could release that tiger, so to speak, creating a crisis that got the adrenalin pumping and wiped out whatever the Hump had been thinking. After the crisis passed – and it always did, usually with a minimal loss of life – the Hump never gave a thought to what had been in the forefront of its mind a moment before.

Once the average lifespan reached a couple of hundred years, much of what people remembered was irrelevant or detrimental. Who cared if there had been famine or drought a hundred and fifty years earlier? Nobody! Who cared if a war had claimed a million lives in Botswana or Tajikistan (actually, the figure in both cases was closer to two million)? Nobody! What did it matter to survivors what had caused catastrophic events? It didn't. And besides, the military-industrial-educational-entertainment establishment was such a seamless weld of collusion and mutual self-interest that what was really going on was never exposed to the light of day anyway. The media, the fifth column inside the MIEE complex, filtered out much more than was filtered in, by design. Even when people thought they were "informed," they didn't know what they were talking about.

See, that's the point. People fed factoids and distortions don't know what they're talking about anyway, so why shouldn't inputs and outputs be managed more precisely? Why leave anything to chance when it can be designed? We knew we couldn't design everything but we could design the subjective field in which people lived and that would take care of the rest. That would determine what questions could be asked which in turn would make the answers irrelevant. We had to manage the entire enterprise from end to end.

Now, this is the part I love, because I was in on the planning from the beginning. We remove almost nothing from the memory of the collective! But we and we alone know where everything is stored! Do you get it? Let me repeat. Almost all of the actual memories of the collective, the whole herdlike Hump, are distributed throughout the population, but because they are staggered, arranged in niches that constitute multisided

life, and news is managed down to the level of perception itself, the people who have the relevant modules never plug into one another! They never talk to each other, don't you see! Each niche lives in its own deep hole and even when they find gold nuggets they don't show them to anybody. If they did, they could reconstruct the original narrative in its entirety, but they don't even know that!

Isn't that elegant? Isn't that a sublime way to handle whiny neo-liberals who object to destroying fundamental elements of collective memory? We can show them how it's all there but distributed by the sixtysixfish algorithm. That algorithm, the programs that make sense of its complex operations, and the keys to the crypto are all in the hands of the Masters.

I love it! Each Humpling has memory modules inserted into its wetware, calibrated to macro conceptions that govern the thinking and actions of the body politic. Because they don't know what they're missing, they don't know what they're missing. We leave intact the well-distributed peasant gene that distrusts strangers, changes, and new ideas, so if some self-appointed liberator tries to tell them how it works, they snarl or remain sullen or lower their eyes or eat too much or get drunk until they forget why they were angry.

At the same time, we design a memory web that weaves people into communities that cohere, spun through vast amounts of disconnected data. Compartmentalization handles all the rest. The Hump is overloaded with memories, images, ideas, all to no purpose. We keep fads moving, quick quick quick, and we keep the Hump as gratified and happy as a pig in its own defecation.

## MemoRacer, Master Hacker

Of course, there are misfits, antisocial criminals and hackers who want to reconstitute the past. We devised an ingenious way to manage them too. We let them have exactly what they think they want.

MemoRacer comes to mind when we talk about hackers. MemoRacer flipped through niches like an asteroid through the zero-energy of space. He lived in a niche long enough to learn the parameters by which the nichelings thought and acted. Then he became invisible, dissolving into the background. When he grew bored or had learned enough, he flipped to the next niche or backtracked, sometimes living in multiple niches and changing points of reference on the fly. He was slippery and smart, but he had an ego and we knew that would be his downfall.

The more he learned, the more isolated he became. The more he understood, the less he could relate to those who didn't. Understand too much, you grow unhappy on that bench listening to your neighbors' prattle. It becomes irritating. MemoRacer and his kind think complexity is exhilarating. They find differences stimulating and challenging. The Hump doesn't think that way. Complexity is threatening to the Hump and differences cause anxiety and discomfort. The Hump does not like anxiety and discomfort.

MemoRacer (his real name was George Ruben, but no one remembers that) learned in his flipping that history was more complex than anyone knew. That was not merely because he amassed so many facts, storing them away on holodisc and drum as trophies to be shown to other hackers, but because he saw the links between them. He

knew how to plug and play, leverage and link, that was his genius. Because he didn't fit, he called for revolution, crying out that "Memories want to be free!" I guess he meant by that vague phrase that memories had a life of their own and wanted to link up somehow and fulfill themselves by constituting a person or a society that knew who it was. In a society that knows who it is precisely because it has no idea who it is, that, Mister Master Hacker, is subversive.

Once MemoRacer issued his manifesto on behalf of historical consciousness, he became a public enemy. We could not of course say that his desire to restore the memory of humankind was a crime. Technically, it wasn't. His crime was undermining the basis of transplanetary life in the twenty first century. His crime was disturbing the peace.

He covered his tracks well. MemoRacer blended into so many niches so well that each one thought he belonged. But covering your tracks ninety-nine times isn't enough. It's the hundredth time, that one little slip, that tells us who and where you are.

MemoRacer grew tired and forgetful despite using more Perkup than a waking-state addict – as we expected. The beneficial effects of Perkup degrade over time. It was designed that way so no one could be aware forever. That was the failsafe mechanism pharms had agreed to build in as a back door. All we had to do was wait.

The niche in which he slipped up was the twenty-third business clique. This group of successful low-level managers and small manufacturers were not particularly creative but they worked long hours and made good money. MemoRacer forgot that their lack of interest in ideas, offbeat thinking, was part of their psychic bedrock. Their entertainment consisted of golf, eating, drinking, sometimes sex, then golf again. They bought their fair share of useless goods to keep society humming along, consumed huge quantities of

resources to build amusement parks, golf courses, homes with designer shrubs and trees. In short, they were good citizens. But they had little interest in revolutionary ideas and George Ruben, excuse me, MemoRacer forgot that during one critical conversation. He was tired, as I said, and did not realize it. He had a couple of drinks at the club and began declaiming how the entire history of the twentieth century had been stolen from its inhabitants by masters of propaganda, PR, and the national security state. The key details that provided context were hidden or lost, he said. That's how he talked at the nineteenth hole of the Twenty-Third Club! trying to get them all stirred up about something that had happened a century earlier. Even if it was true, who cared? They didn't. What were they supposed to do about it? MemoRacer should have known that long delays in disclosure neutralize even the most shocking revelations and render outrage impotent. People don't like being made to feel uncomfortable at their contradictions. People have killed for less.

One of the Twenty Third complained about his rant to the Club Manager. He did so over a holophone. Our program, alert for anomalies, caught it. The next day our people were at the Club, better disguised than MemoRacer would ever be, observing protocols – i.e. saying nothing controversial, drinking too much, and insinuating sly derogatory things about racial and religious minorities – and learned what they needed to know. They scraped the young man's DNA from the chair in which he had been sitting and broadcast the pattern on the Net. Genetic markers were scooped up routinely the next day and when he left fingerskin on a lamp-post around which he swung in too-tired up-too-long jubilation (short-lived, I can tell you) in the seventy-seven Computer Club niche, he was flagged. When he left the meeting, acting like one of the geeky guys, our people were waiting.

We do this for a living, George. We are not amateurs.

MemoRacer taught us how to handle hackers. He wanted to live in the past, did he? Well, that's where he was allowed to live – forever.

Chemicals and implants worked their magic, making him incapable of living in the present. When he tried to focus on what was right in front of his eyes, he couldn't see it. That meant that he sounded like a blithering idiot when he tried to speak with people who lived exclusively in the present. MemoRacer lived in a vast tapestry of historical understanding that he couldn't connect in any meaningful way to the present or the lived experience of people around him.

There is an entire niche now of apprehended hackers living in the historical past and exchanging data but unable to relate to contemporary niches. It's a living hell because they are immensely knowledgeable but supremely impotent and know it. They teach seminars at community centers which we support as evidence of our benevolence and how wrong they are to hate us.

You want to know about the past? By all means! There's a seminar starting tomorrow, I say, scanning my planner. What's your interest? What do you want to explore? Twentieth century Chicago killers? Herbal medicine during the Ming Dynasty? Competitive intelligence in Dotcom Days? Pick your poison!

And when they leave the seminar room, vague facts tumbling over one another in a chaotic flow to nowhere, they can't connect anything they have heard to their lives.

So everybody pretty much has what they want or at least what they need, using the benchmarks we have established as the correct measures for society. The Hump is relatively happy. The dregs skulk about as reminders of a mythic history we have

invented that everyone fears. People perceive and conceive of things in helpful and useful ways and act accordingly. And when we uplink to nets around all the planets and orbiting colonies, calling the roll on every niche in the known universe, it always comes out right. Everybody is present. Everybody is always present.

Just the way we like it.

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