



Research article

Memoroxin as a Metaphor for Agentic AI: Perceptions on Memory and Autonomy in Meredith Westgate's *The Shimmering State*

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Abstract

This paper examines Meredith Westgate's *The Shimmering State* (2021) to explore the reconfiguration of memory and cognitive autonomy in the digital age. As memory constitutes a fundamental basis of human consciousness, identity, and selfhood, its increasing mediation through technological systems raises critical questions for posthumanist inquiry. The study analyses Memoroxin, a speculative memory-enhancing pharmaceutical, as an analogue of agentic artificial intelligence that operates through neurotechnological intervention. Drawing on N. Katherine Hayles's concept of cognitive assemblages, Bernard Stiegler's theory of pharmacology, and Andrew Hoskins's notion of grey memory, the paper investigates how memory becomes externalized, technologically regulated, and subject to capitalist appropriation. The novel problematizes the boundaries between human cognition and technological agency. The paper argues that Memoroxin functions simultaneously as a cognitive aid and a mechanism of control, transforming memory from an internal repository of experience into a consumable, networked, and compulsive phenomenon. In doing so, *The Shimmering State* offers a critical reflection on the ontological, ethical, and affective consequences of AI-mediated cognition and the growing entanglement of human memory with technological systems.

Keywords: Autonomy, Non-Conscious Cognition, Posthumanism, AI-driven Neurotechnology, Pharmakon, Grey Memory, Cognitive Capitalism.

Conflicts of Interest: The author/s declared no conflicts of interest.

Funding: No funding was received for this research.

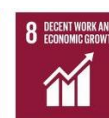
Article History: Received: 14 October 2025. Revised: 04 June 2026. Accepted: 17 June 2026. First published: 26 June 2026.

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Published by: [Aesthetix Media Services, India](#)

Citation: Drishya K. & Reshmi, K. (2026). Memoroxin as a Metaphor for Agentic AI: Perceptions on Memory and Autonomy in Meredith Westgate's *The Shimmering State*. *Rupkatha Journal*, 18(2). <https://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v18n2.07>



1. Introduction

In anthropogony, human origin is associated with the gods rather than with animals. Bernard Stiegler, in his work *Technics and Time* (2022), refers to Plato, who stated this mythical association in his dialogue *Protagoras*. The constitution of humankind is an “animal with something added” and “a deviation from the divine”, connecting to the myth of the Titans, Epimetheus and Prometheus. This claims that the origin of humans begins with both the forgetfulness by the former and the theft of fire by the latter. In anthropocentric notions, the fault of Epimetheus or the lack of humanity is forgotten, highlighting the trait of Prometheus. However, Stiegler asserts that in order to learn about the origin of the human species, it is necessary to know both the fault and the trait.

[He suggests that] what comes to make up for that default in the form of prosthesis (tekhne–). Since the ‘human’ is constituted through its exteriorization into tools, its origin is neither biological (a particular arrangement of cells) nor transcendental (to be found in something like consciousness). (Roberts, 2006, p. 57)

The galloping pace of technological developments accelerates the process of renouncing, unlearning and redefining multitudes of concepts that were confined to the human realm. Involvement in the progress has become unavoidable for human survival and evolution. Posthumanist notions argue against the anthropocentric nature and advocate a co-dependent, co-evolved existence with external living and non-living entities. Bernard Stiegler’s concept of ‘epiphylogenesis’ explores the inseparability of humans from technology. The process of exteriorisation of human consciousness into technicity, thereby enabling co-dependence and co-evolution with external entities. By evolution, it suggests an all-encompassing transformation of human existence, including both physical and mental growth facilitated by technology (Stiegler, 2022, p. 175-177).

Advanced cognition has been the defining characteristic of human beings that effectively distinguishes humans from other species. Human cognition, in the AI era, is one of the ideas deserving to be conceived distinctly, since it was hitherto assumed to be limited to the internal neurological process. Cognition, mind and memory are interconnected concepts that are often employed interchangeably. Though the paper focuses on memory, the other two concepts overlap substantially and it is significant to understand the distinction between them. Mind refers to the functioning of thoughts, feelings and consciousness, whereas memory is stored and retrieved in line with events and experience, while cognition refers to the all-encompassing functions of the brain and particularly the “process of interpreting information in context that connects it with meaning” (Hayles, 2017, p. 118). Although the definitions of these abstract terms can’t be narrowed down, the paper handles these ideas from this limited perspective. Similarly, regarding autonomy and agency, Jessica Taylor, the mental health wellness trainer in her vlog, substantiates that autonomy is an individual’s right to make choices cater to themselves without external interference, while agency is the ability to act on such decisions (Taylor, 2023).

The paper tries to emphasise the changing perceptions of human memory by analysing the characters in *The Shimmering State* (2021) by Meredith Westgate. It looks into how the autonomous decisions made by the characters ultimately lead to the deprivation of their agency in cognitive matters. The main characters perceive the possibility of prompting memories differently depending on their circumstances, which either goes in their favour or jeopardises their existence. Though the tendency of speculative narratives is to project the

negative aspects of human dealings and to warn of the harsh realities behind technological developments, the paper attempts to examine the depictions of characters with dissimilar notions about the same. However, it looks at how these distinct views perform at different levels, leading to the materialisation and commercialisation of human memory.

2. Review of Literature

Prior study on the text is confined to the article titled "Spiders [...] stringing webs through her head': Representations of memory in Anthony Doerr's *Memory Wall* and Meredith Westgate's *The Shimmering State*" (2023) by Sonia Front. It discusses the commercialisation of prosthetic memory. It offers a close analysis of both the text to understand the symbiotic relationship between memory and experience when it is externalised. It also focuses on the repercussions on identity when digital outsourcing occurs. Substantial work on the text is limited to the above-mentioned article. Other works associated with the area include "Human autonomy in the age of artificial intelligence" (2022) by Carina Prunkl, which broaches the risks to autonomy caused by the interventions of AI. It points out AI manipulations with reference to real incidents such as Cambridge Analytica's vote manipulation, Facebook's "emotional contagion" experiment and so on. It states the ethical dimensions of AI-facilitated online manipulation. Yingyi Han's study on the "Evolution of mediated memory in the digital age: tracing its path from the 1950s to 2010s" (2023) provides the trajectory of mediated memory over the stipulated time period. It analyses three major trends in the study of mediated memory: Neurocognitive science research, Humanities and Social Science and Interdisciplinary research on mediated memory.

The book section on "Integrating Minds and Machines: The Role of Digital Externalization in Evolving Cognitive Architectures" from the text *Frontiers in Artificial Intelligence and Applications* (2024) by Gleb Vzorin, offers a nuanced comprehension of digital memory externalisation rather than providing the traditional negative implications. It is a more scientific and pragmatic understanding of digital externalisation, based on the Mnemonic Google Effect, which argues that it is a deliberate act rather than an unintentional process. *Agentic AI: Autonomous Intelligence for Complex Goals—A Comprehensive Survey* by Deepak Bhaskar Acharya, Karthigeyan Kuppan and B Divya (2025) explores the unique characteristics and methodologies in the development of agentic AI. It also investigates the potential applications of agentic AI across areas such as healthcare, finance and adaptive software systems. It poses the ethical challenges of the application and provides various execution frameworks that contribute to the development of agentic AI.

3. Research Gap

The above-mentioned works overlap with the current study. The article by Sonia Front aims to understand the ethical aspects and challenges to identity when externalising memory, and the study by Carina Prunkl warns about AI manipulation in real-life instances, whereas this study focuses on the textual aspects of the same, emphasising both the negative sides and the traits of AI. The remaining studies have laid the scientific base for this study and offered a thorough understanding of the historical and pragmatic framework. It is based on these articles that the dearth in the analysis of the varied perceptions of the characters in the text regarding memory externalisation leads to the deprivation of human autonomy over cognitive matters. The gap

is recognised in analysing the influence of technology on the drafting of human decisions and in the lack of proper studies from the perspective of both preaching and, simultaneously, warning against the advances of AI in the text, which will be dealt with in the study. The study also addresses the lack of studies analysing the depiction of a pharmaceutical drug performing as an agentic AI that controls human thought processes and actions.

4. Theoretical Framework

Researchers, such as Andy Clark, David Chalmers, and Marshall McLuhan, have proposed the subject of mind extensions beginning in the late 20th century. Studies in scrutinising the transforming nature of human memory are also gaining more prominence in the era of Artificial Intelligence. The theoretical framework by Katharine Hayles (2017) on 'Cognitive Assemblages' is the merging of human and technical systems that cooperate to function together in cognitive realms. It argues that cognition is not merely a human characteristic but extends to and overlaps with other entities, including both living and non-living. With reference to the popular posthuman notion, it negates the traditional notion of cognition and creates, as she calls it, a 'planetary cognitive ecology' where all entities are equally capable of cognition and coexistence.

Bernard Stiegler's (2022) idea of Pharmacology helps to state the duality of the Memoroxin in the text. Establishes that it plays the role of both the cure and the poison simultaneously. He has derived the idea from Plato's *Phaedrus*, where Plato considers writing as a pharmakon, preserving and undermining memory. It argues that writing can enhance memory while simultaneously creating forgetfulness. Stiegler associated it with all the technics, emphasising that all sorts of technological systems function as a pharmacological agent. This idea is incorporated in the paper to establish how Memoroxin act as a pharmakon and the externalisation of memory through it gives it a new form as an agentic AI.

Andrew Hoskin on *AI and Memory* discusses the ways in which AI has transformed notions about memory. His conceptualisation of 'Grey Memory' denotes "the sense that a conscious, active, willed memory is obscured in the digital era" (Hoskin & Halstead, 2021). He argues that memories are disjointed, rewritten and distracted due to the abundance of media. Thereby, it surpassed traditional boundaries in terms of space and place. He also hints at the deprivation of human agency over cognitive affairs. Hence, the idea is infused into the paper to comprehend how the externalised memory is similarly tainted, no longer personal when archived and materialised.

4. Discussion

4.1. Memoroxin as an agentic AI: Memory Externalisations and Human Interactions

The plot of the text revolves around the pill called Memoroxin, or the mem and its capabilities on the activation of individual memories.

A new drug that targets and delivers patients' own memories for medical management of Alzheimer's, PTSD, depression, schizophrenia, and other mental disorders with direct links to memory (Westgate, 2021, p. 3).

Memoroxin can be referred to as an agentic AI of the period, as it acts as an autonomous entity determining its effects on individuals specifically. As a result of a survey conducted by

D B Acharya and his team (2025), it was observed that an agentic AI is designed to require minimal human intervention to execute its assigned function. Unlike traditional AI, which entails systematic, structured instructions and close oversight, an agentic AI differs from classical AI systems in its flexibility, autonomy and adaptability (pp. 914, 915). Since Memoroxin is customised for individuals, it deals with a specific goal. The Mem functions differently for patients as per their neurological issues. Similar to an agentic AI, the mem is assigned a complex task in the medical field and is context-aware; it is due to this that the default usage of the drug operates inversely for others. The characters in the text observe the effects of the drug in different ways. They have multiple notions of addressing the concept of employing the mem. Lucien, a photographer who returns from New York, when his grandmother has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's. His mother died recently of cancer, for which he constantly felt guilty of not being by her side during hard times. Lucien, knowing the specific treatment for his grandmother, decides to use it to understand the effect it has on her. Gradually, he finds it as a coping mechanism to forget his guilt and to regain his past. He gets to be in her memory and could relive with her mother, know about her childhood and be in her memory. In the case of Lucien, he chooses to be with those memories deliberately, with no external forces.

Photography was his way of processing, of seeing. Everything he shot of her then felt incomplete, and only something added could have changed that. In a way, the paint was an homage to her. But now Lucien's whole world is off, and nothing, no amount of paint, can fix it. (Westgate, 2021, p. 13).

Lucien is a person who was confined to the static nature of the profession he chose. Photos are the present-day extensions of memory, seizing the moment for later recurrence of retrieval. It figuratively depicts the character's prior affiliation towards the technological preservation of memories. This tendency to extend memory, as Katharine Hayles conceptualises cognition as not limited to human consciousness but extends to non-conscious cognitive entities as well. She states in the prologue to *Unthought: The Power of Cognitive Nonconscious*:

Most human cognition happens outside of consciousness/unconsciousness; cognition extends through the entire biological spectrum, including animals and plants; technical devices cognize, and in doing so, profoundly influence human complex systems (Hayles, 2017, p. 3).

The usage 'being in one's memory' differs from the notion of being remembered by a person through their memories. This process of externalising one's memory through technology enables another person to access and experience it. As Andrew Hoskin rightly proclaims: "The ideal of a dialogical construction of memory is appropriated by AI's promise of enabling an eternal conversation with the past you, and the past others" (2024, p. 3). Westgate points out that Lucien used the pill quite aware of its illegality. He found the freedom his mother longed for in her life, terrifying. He preferred the control of photography, the limit of the moment it captures. This justifies the character of Lucien that he never objects to the fact that the drug is controlling his memory; on the contrary, he finds it to be an escape from his reality.

...after just one pill...enough to take his mind off everything, to get out of his own head. Maybe to inspire him once more. (Westgate, 2021, p. 145)

He was ignorant of his family history; memories of his grandmother led him to know that she was an excellent screenwriter, though she could not see her name on screen. Her screenplay had won awards, but under another person's name. For Lucien, finding his lineage was a revelation he came to after his grandmother's demise. Slowly, by the time he senses that the

drug has serious repercussions, as he overuses it, becomes unmanageable and can't control the rush of memories it brings to him, irrespective of the time and place which led him to the centre.

He feels himself unravelling, yet keeps pulling at the loose strand. Has spending time in his grandmother's memories made him less tolerant of his own generation? Are her eyes, inside him, influencing how he sees? Or is this him, breaking through her kindness? (Westgate, 2021, p. 246)

During the treatment in the rehabilitation clinic, he defended his act of consuming the pills. He was not guilty of being in her grandmother's memories without permission; nevertheless, he was thankful to learn more about her. Despite Dr. Sloane's attempts to make him understand that her memories are controlling his own and his thoughts, he has found a safe haven to hide from his responsibilities and promises he has unkept. He was jealous of his grandmother because:

She disappears into moments where his mother still lives, and where he exists, before all this, what could be the harm, in seeing what she sees? What damage would it do her to share? (Westgate, 2021, p. 134)

Memoroxin here performs the same function as AI. Andrew Hoskin has observed that AI is an effective human cognitive enhancement. He remarks:

AI overcomes unwanted forgetting, giving memory new hope, yet through its production of a past that never existed, it makes forgetting impossible; the AI agentic past is one without parameters in the machine's new capacity for forging and remaking long-term memory. (Hoskin, 2024, p. 3)

Extrapolating from these ideas, human abilities collaborating with technical devices form a network of actants that redefine what it means to be human in the accelerating pace of the technological realm. The Memoroxin is an 'active node' in connecting the human and non-human agents in a larger assemblage, which involves the human cognitive system, pharmaceutical composition and the diagnosis and evaluation of the technologically externalised memory. Accessing grandmother's memory creates ambiguities regarding 'self' in him. However, Lucien focuses on the positive possibilities of Memoroxin, where he could explore the unexperienced happiness of life, which would otherwise be impossible. Besides, this collective process enhances human capability of retrieving human memory, altering the experiences of traditional intrinsic neurological processes. It thereby negates anthropocentric ideas of memory and asserts that human and non-human cognition function together in the process of co-evolution in the era. Any form of assemblage can function beneficially if it is delegated responsibly and with conscious awareness.

Another character is Remi, who found that the pill allows her to be in her boyfriend David's memory after his death. She is the daughter of Dr. Angelica Sloane. Dr. Sloane was the one who treated David for his neurological issues. She made the same mistake of being in her beloved's memory to feel closer to that person. These characters often exhibit the trait of being in another's memory and continue to do the same when it eventually becomes a habit without their knowledge. The emotional bondage makes them succumb to the available options. Angelica had taken control of her daughter's life. She thinks:

Remi might have chosen to keep David in her memory, despite the pain, but only without knowing how much better she would feel without him. How much better her life could

be. One shouldn't be allowed to decide such things for themselves. Someone who loves you, who wants what's best for you, that's who should be burdened with the decision. (Westgate, 2021, p. 264)

In the case of Lucien, the choice was his; either to use the pill or to get the treatment for clearing his 'impure memory'. While for Remy, it is her mother, Angelica, who thinks that it is best for her daughter to wipe away the new memory. Here arises the question of who decides for whom? They are under the constant control of one or the other, either people or machines. Remy could possibly experience the occurrences she had in her life through his memories. The technological assistants, like prosthetic memory alone, support the experiencing of the "repeatability of temporal objects" as Bernard Stiegler calls it, the 'tertiary memory'. It is about the exteriorisation of memory into technical objects, which thereby shapes human consciousness and experiences differently. He argues that this is a form of 'rememorisation of the past' (2022, p. 246). When Lucien accesses his grandmother's memory, it is not the usual process of grandmother remembering her daughter, but it is rememorised by Lucien from her memories.

Hayles states that technical cognition functions similarly to human nonconscious cognition in the present time. The technical systems serve as a backup for human cognition, so that the latter won't be overwhelmed by massive information (2017, p. 11). The emergence of such technical extensions to memory rapidly alters the ways in which humans interact with different entities and how they interconnect with one another. Likewise, the Memoroxin establishes a foundation for those who consume it to pervade their consciousness with their beloved ones, as in the case of the above-mentioned characters. Lucien and Remi could find a sense of consciousness, belonging and a purpose for their existence at the time of their depressive state.

Memoroxin, benefiting the patients with neurological and mental disabilities, forms another positive side. The selected extracted memories infused into the mem, help patients regain their memory and a sense of themselves. The nurse taking care of Florence, Lucien's grandmother, remarks that for her, they didn't selectively choose particular memories but pulled a wide assortment from her whole life and flooded her brain. It clearly mentions that it is unknown what can trigger a patient's mind after the intake, indicating the idea of a clear autonomous entity playing on the human brain. This conglomeration between human and machinic entities is what Hayles (2017) conceptualised as 'Cognitive Assemblages'- an interconnected system of both human and non-human entities, that even when not conscious, absorb information and take meaningful action (p.116). According to this approach, cognition is dispersed throughout material agents, biological systems and technological infrastructures rather than being limited to human minds. Although the pill doesn't possess consciousness, it functions as a non-conscious cognitive agent with the larger assemblage of the patient's neurological operations, pharmaceutical properties and technical assistance. As part of this distributive system, it assists human cognition in functioning and progressing properly. Therefore, the consciousness that the patients are attaining is obtained from a larger context of a connected network. Florence's nurse further explains the procedure of the treatment:

It's not like playing old videos or showing her photographs. The memories in her Memoroxin carry her consciousness- all her thoughts and feelings from the moments themselves, and like I said, there's a little something to suppress whatever's going on now, too, so she doesn't get confused. (Westgate, 2021, p. 127)

The nuanced and effective treatment, as it asserts, establishes that even the affirmation of eradicating the perplexity of the patient becomes possible due to the broader connectivity it enhances. As Hayles (2017) mentions, such systems function in a 'planetary cognitive ecology'. She validates the idea with that of the 'Actor-Network' theory by Bruno Latour, which discusses the interaction between social and natural actants, which could be human and non-human, that are not isolated but are defined by the interconnectedness between them (p.115). This agency, attained through the network, enhances the medical sector to achieve progressive and alternative cognitive strategies in the field.

It is observed that the non-living entities also cognise and interpret things as aforementioned. Scientific research projects are being conducted to end human forgetting and enable AI-mediated memories. As part of the research conducted at MIT Media Lab, Pentland found a device called 'Sociometer' to detect and measure the social signalling among groups. It is worn on the shoulders to inspect human interactions, analysing proximity, language, gestures and so on. The inferences observed are that this technique operates similarly to human cognitive nonconscious, which interprets social signals from others. It says that if human nonconscious cognition is externalised to the sociometer, it can predict the result of various kinds of interactions. It could function as a feedback system across different organisations and other sectors. This demonstrates how less significant conscious deliberations and logical discussions are when nonconscious cognitive technical systems could derive them from social signals (Hayles, 2017, pp. 126-127). The depiction of Memoroxin is quite similar to an agentic AI in this sense, as it aids the characters in retrieving and deriving their own and their beloved's memories.

4.2. Memoroxin as a Pharmakon: Questioning Human Autonomy over Cognition

Andrew Hoskin's concept of the 'third way of memory' asserts the role of AI in redefining human memory. It moves beyond the traditional perception of memory as an individual process to a collective sense of memory. Hence, it is:

to recognise how the entanglements between humans and machines both enable and endanger human agency in the making and the remixing of individual and collective memory. (Hoskin, 2024)

This shared memory has a sense of collective association, yet it can also be troublesome. He argues that the conglomeration in memory is not solely determined by the intervention of the agentic AI alone, but also by the context of recollection. He creates a distinction between the major types of forgetting: first, the failure to convert into long-term memory, and second, the inability to retrieve from long-term memory. He explains that in the former, it could be a slip of the mind, which could be unremarkable or unnoticed, while the latter could be of "the degrading of memory over time, motivated forgetting, silencing, or suppression" (Hoskin, 2024, p. 7). Nonetheless, Memoroxin has been a great help to patients who have difficulty tracking their memory. The individualised memories are extracted and transferred into the pill. As a result, this could be helpful for patients when assisted with tracking their memories, as it creates a new form of memory that can be extracted from the archive later. For non-patients, who do not access the drug consciously becomes difficult to regain their old memories.

Sophie is a former dancer at a restaurant; her job required pleasing high-profile people attending the restaurant. Ray Delany, a big-shot Hollywood producer, was a regular customer at her restaurant. Sophie was forced to use the mem by Delany and she starts to have visions

of his memories of killing, abusing and harassing people, as she felt it no less real than if it were her own.

I started to lose the ability to differentiate what was mine and what was his, and what I could stop and what I couldn't, and when I realised that, I had to...stop myself. (Westgate, 2021, p. 162)

She has begun to lose her consciousness and she could hardly distinguish herself from what was happening to her. The power exercised by the active pervasiveness of both human and technical cognitive factors together in the assemblage work distinctly with those who are forced to take the drug. The cognitive decisions of the actants in the collective network affect each other. The interactions between human consciousness and technology, and the interaction between human and technical non-conscious cognition, affect the entire system. Human decisions might also affect the context in which they interact with the technical system. Here, in the case of Sophie, the visions she had were detrimental to her consciousness.

All Sophie wants now is to lose the ability to leave herself. To forget what she knows about the other eyes, and to see the world through hers alone. (Westgate, 2021, p. 224)

Hayles verifies the idea of Nigel Thrift that the technological unconscious being in an assemblage brings about neurological as well as bodily changes (2017, p. 117). Sophie detaches from her usual life, and she cannot concentrate on anything else. She had developed self-doubt and had lost track of her own 'self'. It not only affected her psychologically, but the lack of sleep due to fatigue had completely drained her physically. The drug plays autonomously upon her, and consequently, the effect should also be different. Unlike the characters who took advantage of the drug, their consciousness was ready to accept the effects in whatever possible ways, because for them, it was a way of escape from reality. Sophie's consciousness rejected the forceful imposition of the pills and her neurological settings rejected the cognitive nonconscious operations. Such technical cognitive systems take away human agency from the decision-making processes of human cognition. Research indicates that the possibilities of such technical nonconscious systems replacing human cognition are higher with current developments.

Cognitive assemblages transform the contexts and conditions under which human cognition operates, ultimately affecting what it means to be human in developed societies. (Hayles, 2017, p. 120)

Except Sophie, a few others have taken the assistance of the drug by their own choice and have benefited from it. Nevertheless, the autonomy they have exercised in determining a pharmaceutical drug to function with their cognitive system has technically overtaken agency for an external artefact to decide on their remembrance and forgetfulness. The introduction of the drug aimed at the benefit of the people; However, the illegal use of it led to the setting up of a rehabilitation centre to cure those affected and to wipe out the repercussions of the drug on them. Again, it needs the assistance of a technical system to clean the memory by selectively targeting the memory for permanent removal. As Stiegler's concept is rightly employed by Hayles, all such active technological assistance functions as a pharmakon, which is simultaneously beneficial and harmful.

A pharmacological dynamic of poison and cure, offering the powerful advantages of convenience, satisfaction of desires, and enhanced navigation while increasing surveillance, directed marketing, and capitalist exploitation. (Hayles, 2017, p. 125)

The analysis of the text justifies the statement that it helped a few characters while making it dreadful for others. Meanwhile, it led to the deprivation of their consciousness, autonomy and agency. Human cognitive boundaries determine the consciousness regarding one's identity. The lack of awareness about the existence creates a sense of purposelessness in the lives of those individuals. They have lost their control over cognitive matters, where willful memory is deprived. Hoskin's concept of 'grey memory' states the notion of memory being obscured by technological intervention. Memory has surpassed space and time since it is mediated and distributed; hence, it is no longer private. When memory is extended through external artefacts, it loses the authenticity of human memory retrieval as it can be rewritten, restructured and retrieved with mutations. Once externalised, it becomes recurring and it no longer holds a similar experience (Hoskin & Halstead, 2021). Though most of the text's characters align with the positive sides of the drug, the fact is that it denies human agency over cognitive matters. Memoroxin helps them to be in an alternate world, an escape from reality. This fascination towards the drug creates the sensation to employ it, which in turn leads to the advent of the centres that are needed to regain the original memories. Hence, this could develop a dependency against the co-evolution that the posthuman notions broach. Moreover, the burgeoning clinic as a remedy for regaining original memory, evidently states the capitalist strategy to monetise human memory.

Dr. Sloane, who is in charge of the centre, was aware of the negative aspects of Memoroxin, being one of the pioneers of the initial extraction research of the drug. She herself had used mem for capturing another person's memory, though only for initial research. Breaching of one's privacy, regardless of the relationship, is a violation. Sahar was Dr. Sloane's girlfriend. Similar to how the technique of the drug helped in reducing the distance between the people, bringing them closer, it might drift apart relations when harsh realities kept hidden in one's mind are revealed to another person. Discerning the fact that Sahar disliked certain aspects of Dr. Sloane led to a rift between them. She could not properly communicate with Sahar later because she was unaware of the violation she committed and was afraid of the consequences she would have to confront for the breach of conduct. This could be one of the reasons behind Dr. Sloane's idea of the centre for such people who find it difficult to detach from the intoxicating power to inquire impertinently into others' minds. However proximate a relation may be, judgments arise after knowing certain facts that were left unsaid.

This is what she tries to convey to her patients at the centre while healing them from the misuse; that she understands their pain. That there is a way through it. (Westgate, 2021, p. 111)

The treatment in the centre is clearly defined for the patients. It has three major steps depending on the severity of the 'contamination', as they call it, that occurred to each patient. Diagnosing the level of abuse caused by the drug and the corruption that occurs in one's consciousness is analysed in the first step. Cleaning the memory system by wiping out foreign memories with the technique of 'helpful amnesia'. In the final phase, patients are reintroduced to their original memories.

Your counselor, who will guide you in crafting the best memory map to maintain a cohesive identity, even with your chosen omission. (Westgate, 2021, p. 9)

Here emerges the question of autonomy. As it is mentioned that the Memoroxin is not meant for sharing, a majority of the inmates of the centre have taken advantage of the pill, either deliberately or unknowingly, despite the consequences. The characters are forced to remove

the 'impure memories', even though it was their decision to use Memoroxin; the centre operates the restructuring of memories through technical interventions. This shows that the 'third way of memory' recognises the potential of AI while simultaneously replacing human agency over remembering and forgetting. Both Memoroxin, which enables patients with mental and neurological issues and the mechanism in the centre, which wipes out human memories and retrieves certain others, are accurate instances of an agentic AI, designed to make autonomous decisions over human cognitive matters. The advent of the drug has enhanced the opportunity to implicitly control the human mind in remembering and forgetting. The centre facilitates the marketing of human memory. The characters are victimised in this manner by depriving them of the agency to control their cognitive systems. This 'new memory' can never be individualised as it will always be at stake of publicization and manipulation. Similar to Stiegler's vision, tertiary memory, moulded with the assistance of technology, leads to the industrialisation of memory, where it loses its individuation. This loss is what he mentioned as the 'proletarianization' of the spirit or 'pauperization of culture' (Roberts, 2006, pp. 55-63). This industrialisation of memory in the centre leads to the loss of individuation or the self when memories are no longer private, which also deprives human agency over their personal memory. Externalised memories can serve as a remedy for those who are consciously unstable, but can disrupt cognitive coherence if not employed cautiously.

5. Conclusion:

Literary narratives are not merely representations but also a farsighted vision of the near future. Human beings are in the process of evolution in all possible sectors and dimensions. As the text portrays Memoroxin inducing memories individually and distinctly for each person, it emphasises the significance of technical devices' agency over humans. The flexibility, autonomy and specificity of the drug demonstrate how the agentic AI functions in the current scenario. The analysis provides a profound understanding that memory is no longer an interiorised phenomenon but is mediated, distributed and modulated. External artefacts, technical assemblages, have developed to a position to engage with cognition to restructure human memory. Although Memoroxin is designed for long-term purposes for multiple neurological impairments, it also engages in the modification of remembrance, forgetfulness and even the existence of humans in the technological ecology. It intervenes in the autonomous decision-making process, nonetheless helping people with neurological disabilities to regain their consciousness and derive multiple perceptions based on their circumstances.

For Lucien, Remy, Dr. Sloane, Florentine, it paved the way to be closer to their loved ones, enabled them to experience what their close ones had experienced before or those moments being repeated which they once experienced together, to have that empathy, or to form a sense of collective consciousness, when their decision was autonomously taken by themselves. While for Sophie, it became a dread because it was a coercive decision. Human cognition, with the assistance of technology, has transcended space and time as it can be rewritten, restructured and regained. Therefore, it cannot be relied upon as it is no longer private. Meanwhile, it leads to the materialisation of memories and hence deprives humans of autonomy and agency over cognitive matters. The study is limited to the depictions in a single speculative narrative, and it does not attempt to generalise the results of the analysis. It can be further prolonged to other speculative fictions and posthuman narratives. Besides, the study focuses on the textual aspects of memory externalisations, whereas it could be further

extended to instances of technological and AI-algorithmic influences and interventions in real life.

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Bio Note

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