

postHUMANities

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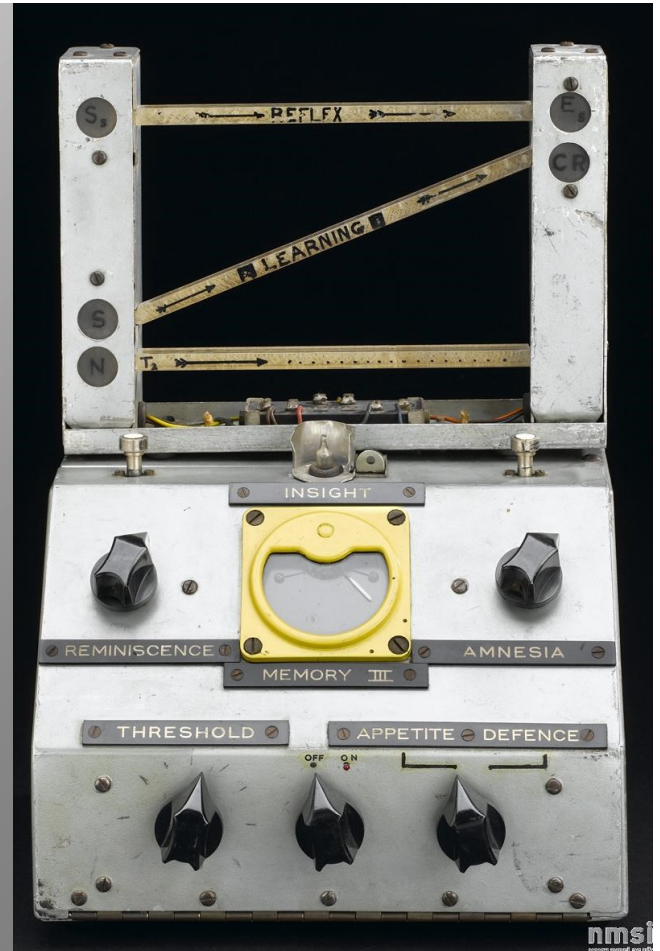
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Sinclair Auditorium

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An Artificial History of Natural Intelligence

Abstract: The history of psychology and cognitive science since the Second World War has been intimately linked with the development of artificial intelligence and cybernetics. In this context, the natural intelligence of the human mind is either simulated by some kind of artificial entity, or is understood itself as a form of technology -- an "information processing machine." Recent attempts to bridge the gap between natural and artificial thinking have emphasized the fundamental relationships between mind and technology, as in for example the "extended mind" philosophy of Andy Clark, the actor-network theory of Bruno Latour et al., or the cyborg fantasies of the posthuman. However, all of these hybrid concepts maintain a fundamental distinction between natural and artificial thought, or else erase it entirely. Here, I will propose that a history of "thinking technologies" demands a more radical perspective, namely the theory that human, that is intelligent, thinking begins with its own technologization. Deploying some philosophical and anthropological ideas concerning technogenesis, I will ask, what are the implications for thinking about artificial and natural intelligence once we recognize that human thought is conditioned by both its natural physiology and its technological formation? Surprisingly perhaps, it will be clear that a modern notion of human freedom and intelligence arises from the very conditions of automaticity that are imposed by our own technologization.