TRAUMA & MEMORY

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From intelligence to memory: AI Algorithms and the Transformations of Individual and Collective Remembrance

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The journal Trauma & Memory invites contributions to a special issue dedicated to the relationship between Artificial Intelligence (AI) and memory, exploring the role of algorithmic technologies in the construction, transformation, and connection of individual and collective remembrance.

Memory has never been a mere repository of past traces, a compact and perfectly catalogued archive. Rather, it is a dynamic phenomenon, mutable over time, shaped and mediated by the social and technological contexts in which it develops. From the invention of writing to the emergence of printing, photography, and cinema, each technological innovation has altered the practices of remembering and forgetting, reshaping the memory regimes of an era (Assmann, Cultural Memory and Early Civilization, 2011). Today, with the rise of AI systems capable of archiving, selecting, reworking, and generating information, we are witnessing an even more radical transformation: algorithmic memory does not merely preserve the past; it actively restructures it.

Digital platforms that record and archive the online activities of both human and nonhuman entities, machine learning models that generate historical reconstructions, and generative algorithms that rewrite cultural narratives are not merely tools for memory support, but rather agents of memory reorganization (Van Dijck, Mediated Memories in the Digital Age, 2007). This dynamic is at the core of the structural changes that are redefining societies and cultures through processes of algomorphic socialization (Grassi, Per una sociologia algomorfica, 2024). This paradigm invites reflection on how algorithms not only influence but actively shape and co-construct social and cognitive structures, redefining the ways in which individual and collective memory—both intimate and public—is shared and constructed.

If memory is inseparable from its technical supports (Stiegler, Technics and Time, 1994), what kind of memory is taking shape in the era of artificial intelligence? Is AI fostering a new ecology of memory, in which the past is continuously updated, personalized, and rewritten? Or are we witnessing an increasing cognitive delegation, where human memory progressively adapts to algorithmic logic?

This special issue seeks contributions that explore these questions through interdisciplinary approaches from sociology, cultural studies, philosophy, literature, media studies, and cognitive sciences. The objective is to examine how algorithmic technologies not only archive and organize memory but also redefine its processes, boundaries, and epistemological, affective, and social implications, ultimately transforming the very nature of remembrance in the age of artificial intelligence.

Possible Themes and Topics

We invite contributions that explore, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- 1. AI and Literary Imagination
 - The role of AI in reshaping narrative structures, literary memory, and the preservation of cultural heritage.
 - How does AI challenge or reinforce traditional literary criticism and hermeneutics?
 - AI-generated storytelling and its implications for authorship, creativity, and cultural continuity.
 - Memory, intertextuality, and algorithmic pastiche: how do large language models reshape our relationship with literary traditions?
- 2. Memory and Automation
 - The impact of AI on human cognitive processes and the automation of remembering.
 - How do recommendation systems and memory-triggering algorithms alter personal and collective recollection?
 - Memory delegation: does AI enhance or erode the human ability to remember?
 - Algorithmic nostalgia: how do AI-driven platforms curate and frame our memories (e.g., social media "memories" features)?
- 3. Collective Memory and AI (Connective Memory)
 - AI as an integrated element of common memory rather than a mere tool for augmentation.
 - The shift from archival memory to dynamic, connective memory.
 - How does AI contribute to shaping, storing, and altering shared cultural narratives?
 - Analogies with past technological revolutions (e.g., photography's role in reshaping memory and historical access).

4. AI, Bias, and the Politics of Remembering

- How do AI systems prioritize, filter, and erase memories?
- Algorithmic bias and its impact on the construction of historical narratives and cultural memory.
- The geopolitics of memory: who decides what AI remembers?
- Deepfakes, synthetic media, and the manipulation of public memory.
- 5. Historical Narratives, AI, and Memory Conservation
 - The interaction between AI, historiography, and the mediation of historical experiences.
 - How does AI influence historical storytelling and the preservation of mediated experiences?
 - AI in digital humanities: reconstructing lost archives, forgotten voices, and alternative historical perspectives.
 - The role of AI in memory institutions (museums, libraries, archives) and the ethical challenges of curating the past through algorithms.
- 6. Emotional Memory, Trauma, and AI
 - Can AI simulate, process, or store emotional memory?
 - AI and therapeutic uses of memory: reconstructing trauma, personal identity, and historical memory.
 - Machine learning and affective computing: how do AI models respond to, encode, or distort human emotions in remembering?
 - The ethics of AI-mediated personal memory (e.g., posthumous AI chatbots, virtual memory preservation).

We welcome original research articles, theoretical explorations, and interdisciplinary approaches addressing these and related questions. In order to participate to the call, please send us abstracts from 5000 to 10 000 characters (References excluded) by **April 25**th. Selected contributors will have to send their complete papers by **June 15**th.

Proposals might be sent to massimo.caon@uniroma2.it