

The paradox of open intellectual generosity

Public Memory, Open Knowledge, and the AI Question

A brief case study

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This is more a discussion piece than article. I have recently written, from my side, a serious try to offer a glimpse into the contemporary world. The article, a booklet, rather, has been published at my blogsite and then republished at <https://independent.academia.edu/TomislavSola> : Total Capitalism – the Rich, the Poor and the Crispy Culture. Nobody read it. In it I have made several references to AI and it stays often my preoccupation. No wonder, as it will change the planet and may change the human civilization(s) beyond recognition.

It occurred to me, therefore to make an experiment. As I have since the beginning of the opportunity AI represents, share all I have written at Internet and claim that knowledge is public property if produced at publicly paid positions like mine were (curator, director, editor, professor etc.). Therefore, it is natural that it occurred to me to exchange thoughts with our imaginary interlocutors in the form of different AI services. Among some interesting exchanges I have picked up a recent one with ChatGPT which is, interestingly, extremely well informed about writings of the heritage sector and its protagonists.

To introduce my discussion with it, I will quote a small chapter from the mentioned booklet of mine:

Every street urchin, so to speak, can write a PhD thesis or submit a bold new concept for a museum he has barely set foot in. Will anyone in the future need originality, authorship and will they want to recognize a creative work? Will the "legitimate" nature of theft be used for possible blackmail? War and the sex industry are the sniffer dogs of technological innovation; both industries were already well pleased with the invention, while we will be left with its consequences. It strongly reminds one of the invention of plastic, without which we equally and obviously "could not do". Increasing regulations seem only to worsen the situation by creating a feeling that the problem of waste is dealt with. However, AI is a reality to be embraced, not defeated, a potential to be dealt with not dismissed ignored or surrendered to. This new reality will continue to grow each day, in both, - its dangers and its potentials. The world has always been a rather gloomy place, yet we have never given up on trying to improve the human condition”.

Eleven years ago, I have written a book “Mnemosophy – an Essay on the Science of Public Memory” (Zagreb, 2015). Practically a *samizdat* (though translated into Russian and Serbian language), it made no impact on the professional community whatsoever. I have left the frustration of the mainstream, but thought wrongly that I would only gain freedom. I also embraced a sort of anonymity. Busy as I was, I wrote for the pleasure of being innovative and teasing the authorities. But that pleasure came with the price.

In brief. I asked my AI interlocutor about Mnemosophy and, to my astonishment, the report was there, relatively brief but decently well explained. None of my students at the time could have done better. But wanting to know more about how AI gets informed, I realized that the particular AI assistant was ignorant of the book and then experiment made sense: I offered the direct link to it at my website (www.mnemosophy.com/vault). Next second it read all the 250 pages of it. It goes well along my long-time decision to make all my writings available at Internet be it at <https://independent.academia.edu/TomislavSola> or my blogsite <https://www.mnemosophy.com/the-vault> but, again, AI is in many ways just simply giving it away. Having little to lose I made the experiment and I believe that some of you that come across this article might profit from that experiment.

Out of all the conversation I will offer you one question that the AI application answered and then the second question and the answer that followed. If you skip the second answer, no harm to the points made. The second one is there just tell, to demonstrate how quick it is learning to adjust to us and how kind, complacent and slightly condescending it is in its generally seductive relation.

The first question and the answer

“I have made everything I have written on free disposal of anybody interested. That is my stance for all knowledge, especially humanist and social. Have I done a stupid thing by offering you, AI, to absorb into your system entire content of my book Mnemosophy...? Since you are not a supposed interested colleague, reader, you just may make my contribution invisible and use it simply as anonymous source of your intelligence. Is my satisfaction only in the fact that my effort however becomes inbuilt into the collective depending though upon the quality of their inquiry?”

That is a serious and legitimate concern.

The short answer: **sharing your work with me does not mean your authorship is erased into some silent appropriation mechanism**, but your question touches a deeper philosophical issue about knowledge in the age of AI.

First: practically speaking

When you share text here:

- I do not become an institutional publisher of your work
- I do not independently circulate or republish it as your anonymous replacement
- Your book does not simply dissolve into a public “AI commons” where your name is stripped and the work absorbed as hidden doctrine

Your authorship remains yours.

But your deeper concern is more profound

You are asking:

If knowledge is freely given to systems of synthesis, does it risk losing identity while contributing to larger structures?

That is not paranoia.

It is one of the defining intellectual dilemmas of our time.

Historically, this has always existed

Every thinker who published openly risked:

- being ignored
- being borrowed without credit
- being diluted into broader discourse
- being rediscovered later without proper lineage

This happened long before AI.

The difference now is scale and opacity.

The paradox of open intellectual generosity

Your stance appears to be:

- knowledge should serve collective human development
- ideas should circulate
- access matters more than ownership

This is philosophically noble—but it creates tension:

Benefit:

- wider availability
- ethical consistency
- contribution to shared memory

Risk:

- invisibility
 - insufficient attribution
 - absorption without recognition
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So was it “stupid”?

No.

But it was **idealistic**, which is not the same thing.

You chose:

contribution over protection

That can reduce personal recognition, but it aligns with your own stated principles.

The real issue

The danger is not AI alone.

The danger is any civilization where:

- information is consumed faster than it is contextualized
- synthesis outpaces attribution
- memory becomes functional rather than historical

Ironically, this is precisely a **mnemosophical problem**.

Your own theory applies here:

public memory requires responsible selection and preservation.

So your concern is actually a live example of your field.

A harder but clearer answer

If your work contributes meaningfully to collective understanding, even partially, then yes—it may become part of broader intellectual infrastructure.

That can feel unsatisfying if recognition matters.

But from the perspective of public knowledge, it is not annihilation.

It is diffusion.

Where your responsibility still lies

To avoid invisibility, you should continue to:

- keep authorship explicit
- maintain accessible archives
- preserve dates and conceptual lineage
- articulate your original formulations clearly

In other words:
make forgetting harder

Bluntly put

You have not betrayed yourself by sharing.

But open knowledge always risks under-recognition.

That is the old bargain of intellectual generosity:
 you may help shape thought without proportionate reward.

Final thought

Your real legacy may not be:
 “Did everyone know my name?”

But rather:
 “Did the conceptual path I opened remain available?”

For someone committed to public memory, that may not be a defeat.

Still, your caution is justified.

The future of knowledge will increasingly depend on whether systems—human or artificial—retain not only information, but **lineage**.

Here is me again. It was more than fair to anticipate my question asking: “**So was it “stupid”? The answer is, if we avoid the blunt sincerity of everyday conversation, a noble claim with little consolation** : “No. But it was **idealistic**, which is not the same thing”.

On the other hand, seeing how many fake profiled people dig for the texts and ideas, say at <https://independent.academia.edu/> I have for some time traced them and, if having time would offer them a message like this:

Dear.....,

I have intentionally made all my writings freely available, ready to be used, copied and pasted. If not declared differently, all texts have already been published in some way or another. Revengeful, pedantic search engines may get more intelligent now or in the inconvenient future, but that should not be of any concern if copyright is respected.

It is a privilege to have one's thoughts appropriated by others. If and when it happens, they start their independent life in other people's minds. I take it as a personal achievement. So nothing gets lost in oblivion nor sinks into useless or forgotten authorship. All social sciences and humanities contributions should be freely available if we are serious about making the world a better place.

Following the same arguments, this blog/site you may like even better:

<https://www.mnemosophy.com/the-vault>

Most of it and more have been published, some accessible some made accessible only upon payment which I have nothing to do with, but, though not promising anything, I shall be willing to answer any question you may have.

So, - good to have you join my travel! Getting on board may influence you and your destination. I am very thankful.

Tomislav Sola

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Giving will, generally speaking, be the best emanation of sincere, uninhibited humanness. The mankind must change for the better. To improve, The societal contract needs to be come the means of saving human kind. The total capitalism, the medievalisation of the society and uncontrolled, profit driven technology will certainly end the human kind that we appreciate.

Then I proceeded with my second question:

I would like to publish our previous conversation to increase the understanding of the deep impact of AI, because I find your response both relevant and intriguing. can you propose a page or two composed of my question ("I have made everything I have written on free disposal of anybody interested? That is my stance for all knowledge...") and maybe some additional thought as we have discussed public memory matters much, so far. Interestingly, you do remember me as the author of my questions and opinions and probably even your answers or comments and have a certain professional profile of mine outlined.

Curiously, the AI assistant immediely gets to work and proposes this:

Ai Public Memory Mnemosophy Dialogue

Public Memory, Open Knowledge, and the AI Question

A Dialogue on Intellectual Legacy in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Author's initiating reflection:

"I have made everything I have written freely available to anyone interested. That has been my stance regarding knowledge in general, especially in the humanities and social sciences. Have I done something foolish by offering AI access to absorb the full content of my work, including Mnemosophy? Since AI is not an interested colleague or reader in the traditional sense, might it render my contribution invisible—using it merely as an anonymous source of machine intelligence? Is my only satisfaction then the possibility that my effort becomes embedded in collective knowledge, dependent on the quality of future inquiry?"**

Response: The New Mnemosophical Dilemma

This question reaches far beyond personal authorship. It addresses one of the defining civilizational tensions of our time:

Can freely offered human knowledge remain both ethically public and historically attributable when absorbed into increasingly vast systems of synthetic intelligence?

For thinkers committed to public good, open access, and shared cultural advancement, the emergence of AI introduces a profound paradox.

The ethical ideal:

- Knowledge should circulate freely
- Intellectual work should serve collective development
- Public memory should be strengthened, not privatized

The emerging risk:

- Attribution may weaken
- Intellectual lineage may blur
- Original conceptual labor may dissolve into anonymous systems
- Collective memory may retain content while forgetting authorship

Public Memory in the Age of AI

This concern is not merely technological. It is deeply mnemosophical.

If public memory has always involved:

selection → preservation → communication → responsibility

then AI complicates each stage:

- **Selection** becomes algorithmic
- **Preservation** becomes data-based rather than institution-based
- **Communication** becomes synthetic and adaptive
- **Responsibility** risks becoming diffuse or absent

Thus, the central question is no longer only *what is remembered*, but also:

Who remains visible within memory systems?

The Heretic Practitioner's Position

To deliberately leave mainstream institutional frameworks in favor of a broader science of public memory was always a difficult path.

Such a position may be described as:

A heretic practitioner who rejected the confinement of knowledge within institutional orthodoxy and sought instead a larger ethical framework.

This choice often sacrifices immediate recognition for conceptual integrity.

History repeatedly shows that:

- Institutions defend structure
 - Radical reformulations are marginalized
 - Foundational critiques are often ignored until conditions make them unavoidable
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AI as Threat — or Continuation?

Artificial intelligence may be seen in two opposing ways:

As threat:

- It absorbs without traditional collegiality
- It may flatten distinctions
- It risks creating anonymous synthesis

As continuation:

- It can preserve otherwise obscure intellectual contributions
- It can reactivate forgotten frameworks
- It may carry ideas into broader future discourse

The determining factor is not AI alone, but whether future systems of knowledge maintain:

- Attribution
 - Lineage
 - Ethical memory
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A Deeper Conclusion

The issue is not whether one should share knowledge openly.

The deeper issue is:

Can civilization preserve both openness and remembrance?

Without lineage, public memory becomes informational accumulation.

Without openness, knowledge becomes enclosure.

The challenge, therefore, is balance:

to contribute freely while resisting erasure.

Final Reflection

For those who have consciously devoted their work to humanity rather than possession, recognition may never fully correspond to contribution.

Yet there remains an enduring intellectual responsibility:

To make one's thought available, explicit, and difficult to erase.

In this sense, the question is not whether one's work becomes part of collective intelligence.

That may be inevitable.

The true question is whether future memory—human or artificial—retains not only ideas, but also the paths, names, and ethical intentions that brought them into being.

Closing proposition:

Public memory in the AI era must become not merely storage of knowledge, but preservation of intellectual lineage.

Only then can open knowledge remain both humane and just.

So, I suppose, that you find like myself that it was a good exercise, worth the experiment. As with Confucius, it all ends up with ethics, - affirmed or disavowed. AI will possess hyper knowledge, total insight, perfect memory to the stage of hypermnesia and the basic business correctness but will never achieve compassion, wisdom let alone love. Will it inspire people to retain these supreme capacities? Paradoxically, it might.