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Literary Theories

Hybrid Authorship in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Rethinking Creativity and Creative Writing

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Abstract: This paper examines how Artificial Intelligence is reshaping contemporary creative writing and challenging traditional concepts of authorship, originality, and creativity. Using a qualitative and interdisciplinary approach that combines literary analysis with digital humanities perspectives, the study analyses AI-generated texts, AI-assisted writing practices, and key scholarly debates on computational creativity and authorship. The findings suggest that AI functions not as a replacement for human writers but as a creative collaborator that enables hybrid authorship and new narrative possibilities. AI-assisted writing tools supports experimentation, idea generation, and innovative storytelling practices while simultaneously raising ethical concerns regarding copyright, originality, and the value of human imagination. The paper argues that the emergence of AI marks a significant turning point in literary history, requiring the development of new theoretical and ethical frameworks for understanding creativity in the digital age.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Creative Writing, Digital Literature, Authorship, Computational Creativity, Digital Humanities



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Introduction

Technological change has consistently shaped the production and circulation of literature. The printing press transformed publishing, while the internet revolutionized distribution and readership. In the twenty-first century, Artificial Intelligence (AI) represents the most significant shift in the relationship between technology and literary creation. AI writing tools such as ChatGPT and Sudo write can now produce poems, short stories, essays, and scripts, challenging long-standing assumptions about creativity and authorship.

Creative writing has traditionally been associated with human imagination, emotional depth, and originality. However, AI-generated texts demonstrate that machines can produce coherent narratives and poetic language by analyzing patterns within large datasets. This development raises critical questions: Can machines be creative? Who is the author of AI-generated text? Does AI threaten or enhance human creativity?

Rather than positioning AI as a replacement for human writers, contemporary scholarship increasingly views it as a collaborative tool that reshapes the writing process. Joanna Zylinska argues that “AI creativity is not artificial but collaborative” (15). This perspective suggests that creativity in the digital era is becoming a shared practice between humans and machines. This paper explores how AI reshapes creative writing and examines its implications for authorship, originality, and literary practice.

Review of Literature

Many scholars in digital humanities and media studies have begun examining AI’s role in literature and creativity. N. Katherine Hayles describes contemporary culture as a “posthuman” environment in which humans and intelligent machines co-produce meaning (2). This framework provides a theoretical basis for understanding AI-assisted writing as a hybrid creative practice. Margaret Boden’s theory of computational creativity further supports this perspective. Boden argues that machines can generate novel ideas by recombining existing patterns (23). Although AI lacks consciousness and emotional experience, it can still produce innovative and meaningful outputs. This argument challenges the assumption that creativity must remain exclusively human.

Ross Goodwin’s AI writing experiment *The Road* demonstrates the practical application of machine-generated storytelling. Goodwin describes the attempt as a collaboration between algorithm and human creativity, illustrating how AI can contribute in literary creation.

At the same time, ethical debates surrounding AI-generated content continue to intensify. Many scholars question whether AI training datasets rely too heavily on copyrighted materials. These concerns highlight the need for new ethical and legal frameworks for digital creativity and intellectual property.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative and interdisciplinary research design that combines literary analysis with digital humanities perspectives. The research focuses on AI-generated poetry and narratives, scholarly discussions on computational creativity, and contemporary AI writing tools and practices. The methodology involves three stages. First, textual analysis is conducted to examine AI-generated and AI-assisted writing and identify recurring themes related to creativity, authorship, and collaboration. Second, theoretical analysis applies concepts from digital humanities and literary theory, particularly posthumanism and computational creativity. Finally, comparative interpretation evaluates the differences and similarities between traditional and AI-assisted creative processes to understand how AI transforms writing practices. The study is interpretative and exploratory in nature, focusing on cultural and literary implications rather than quantitative measurement.

Findings

The analysis identifies three major transformations shaping contemporary creative writing in the age of Artificial Intelligence.

Hybrid Authorship

One of the most significant developments is the emergence of hybrid authorship. Rather than replacing writers, AI increasingly functions as a creative collaborator. Writers use AI tools to generate ideas, refine language, experiment with style, and overcome creative blocks. This interaction reshapes the traditional image of the solitary author and replaces it with a collaborative model in which creativity emerges through the dynamic exchange between human intention and machine-generated possibilities. The writing process thus becomes continuous and dialogic, with the human writer evaluating, editing, and shaping AI-generated material into meaningful literary expression.

Expansion of Narrative Possibilities

AI has also expanded the scope and form of storytelling. New narrative formats such as interactive fiction, adaptive narratives, and personalized storytelling experiences have become increasingly prominent. These developments enable readers to participate actively in narrative creation, thereby transforming the reader from passive consumer to co-creator. As a result, the boundaries between writer, reader, and text become increasingly fluid, reflecting broader shifts in digital culture and participatory media.

Ethical and Copyright Concerns

Alongside these creative possibilities, AI-generated texts raise complex ethical and legal questions. Because AI systems are trained on vast datasets that often include existing literary works, concerns about originality, ownership, and intellectual property remain central to ongoing debates. The emergence of AI-assisted writing therefore highlights the rapid need for new ethical guidelines and copyright frameworks capable of addressing the realities of digital creativity.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that Artificial Intelligence is fundamentally reshaping creative writing by transforming authorship into a collaborative and distributed process. Rather than functioning merely as a technological tool, AI increasingly operates as a creative partner that participates in ideation, drafting, editing, and stylistic experimentation. This shift destabilizes the conventional romantic ideal of the individual author and aligns closely with Roland Barthes' influential notion of the "death of the author," in which meaning is no longer embedded in a single, authoritative creator but emerges through a network of textual relationships and reader interpretations (148). In the context of AI-assisted writing, authorship becomes decentralized not only among readers and texts but also between human and machine agents. Consequently, creative production can be understood as a distributed process that blends human intentionality with machine generation.

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This transformation does not eliminate the role of the human writer; rather, it redefines the writer's function. The contemporary author increasingly assumes the role of researcher, editor, and collaborator, guiding AI outputs while shaping narrative direction, tone, and thematic depth. Such a shift signals a broader reconceptualization of creativity as a dialogic and interactive process. The relationship between writer and AI resembles a dynamic feedback loop in which prompts, revisions, and refinements form a continuous process of production. As a result, creativity becomes less about isolated originality and more about coordinating various sources of inspiration and generation.

AI also prompts a significant reconsideration of originality, a concept that has historically been central to literary value. The ideal of pure originality has long been challenged by theories of intertextuality and influence, which emphasise the ways in which literary works are shaped by existing cultural and textual traditions. T. S. Eliot's observation that "Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal" (125) captures the enduring relationship between creativity and transformation. AI brings this intertextual dynamic into sharper focus by explicitly generating new combinations from vast datasets of linguistic and stylistic patterns. In doing so, AI exposes the mechanisms of literary production that have often remained implicit in human writing practices.

Rather than undermining creativity, this visibility encourages a more nuanced understanding of originality as recombination, reinterpretation, and innovation within existing traditions. AI-generated text demonstrates that creativity frequently emerges from the synthesis of prior influences, thereby reinforcing theoretical perspectives that view literature as an evolving network of texts rather than a series of isolated masterpieces. From this perspective, AI does not diminish the value of creativity; instead, it foregrounds the processes that have always shaped literary production.

Nevertheless, the rise of AI-assisted writing introduces substantial ethical and legal challenges that cannot be overlooked. Current copyright frameworks were developed within a paradigm that assumes human authorship and clearly identifiable ownership. AI complicates these assumptions by blurring the boundaries between creator, tool, and source material. Questions of authorship, attribution, and fair use become increasingly complex when machine learning systems generate text based on extensive training datasets. Scholars and policymakers have therefore emphasised the rapid need for transparency in AI training processes and the development of new intellectual property frameworks that address the realities of digital creativity.

Ethical considerations extend beyond legal issues to include concerns about accountability, authenticity, and academic integrity. The integration of AI into creative writing raises questions about the disclosure of AI involvement, the potential standardization of literary styles, and the risk of reinforcing biases embedded in training data. Addressing these challenges requires a balanced approach that combines technological innovation with ethical reflection and responsible usage guidelines. Establishing clear norms for disclosure and attribution will be crucial in maintaining trust and integrity within literary and academic communities.

Ultimately, AI should be understood not as a replacement for human creativity but as a catalyst for new forms of experimentation and collaboration. By expanding narrative possibilities and enabling hybrid creative practices, AI opens new pathways for literary expression in the digital age. Writers can explore innovative genres, experiment with interactive storytelling, and engage in collaborative projects that were previously unimaginable. This evolving partnership between human and machine suggests that the future of creative writing will be characterized not by displacement but by transformation and expansion.

In this sense, AI represents a continuation of technological developments that have historically reshaped literary production, from the printing press to digital publishing platforms. Each technological shift has prompted concerns about authenticity and originality; yet literature has consistently adapted and flourished. AI appears poised to follow a similar trajectory, offering both challenges and opportunities that will shape the next phase of literary development.

Conclusion

Artificial Intelligence represents a transformative moment in literary history, marking a shift in how creativity, authorship, and storytelling are conceptualised and practiced. By enabling interaction between human writers and intelligent systems, AI reconfigures the boundaries of literary production and challenges established assumptions about originality, authorship, and creative agency. Rather than replacing human creativity, AI expands the possibilities of literary expression by introducing new tools for experimentation, hybrid forms of storytelling, and collaborative modes of composition.

At the same time, the rapid integration of AI into creative practice raises important ethical, legal, and institutional questions. Issues of copyright, attribution, transparency, and academic integrity highlight the need for new intellectual property frameworks and responsible guidelines for AI use. Addressing these challenges will be essential to ensure that technological innovation develops alongside ethical accountability.

This study contributes to ongoing debates on digital creativity by demonstrating that AI should be understood as a cultural and creative partner rather than a disruptive replacement. Future research may further explore reader reception of AI-assisted texts, the evolution of literary genres shaped by AI interaction, and the development of policy frameworks that support ethical creative practices.

Ultimately, understanding the evolving relationship between technology and creativity is crucial for navigating the future of literature in the digital era. As AI continues to develop, it is likely to become an integral part of literary culture, shaping not only how texts are produced but also how they are interpreted and valued.

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