

# Authorship in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

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Call for Proposals

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From antiquity to the present day, the concept of authorship has taken many forms in European history, carried various meanings, and often represented an important reference point for understanding literature. As a theoretical framework with its implications and consequences, it has long been investigated by several different disciplines and approaches, emphasizing literary, historical, sociological, or legal contexts. In 20th-century literary theory and history, the concepts of the “death” or “disappearance” of the author have set the ground, followed by a number of other, mainly text-oriented, approaches.

The function of the author has been associated with the theory of the subject, the problem of the relationship between the author and tradition has been examined, and Bruno Latour’s actor–network theory has offered a more complex perspective. The authorial function relates to the question of authority (the author as *auctoritas*), i.e. the guarantee of different types of relevance (truthfulness, authenticity, validity, seriousness or artistic value).

The advent of large language models (LLMs) and artificial intelligence (AI) has changed, and continues to change, a large number of human activities, including the field of literature. AI is becoming an important link in the literary process at all stages. It naturally asserts itself at the stage of creating literary texts, whether it generates texts based on human instructions or serves as an assistant to the human. This new situation naturally calls for a new theoretical reflection on authorship and a reconsideration of some basic concepts.

Our interest at the moment is not to explore new authorial practices involving AI, but rather to consider how the presence of AI is transforming existing concepts and ideas of authorship.

Our initial assumption is that a factor such as AI in the literary process, while its “newness” may also be questioned, opens up a context in which older conceptions of authorship may be perceived differently.

Structural and text-based conceptions of literature typically conceive of the author as a function of the literary text, as a feature of texture or as a landmark in the (re)construction of meaning. Even sociologically or materially oriented research on the nature of literature develops its interest on the ground outlined by the “death of the author” and approaches the

author from the side of the text. With such a theoretical starting point, the use of AI may seem like a “dream come true” of structural analysis (Robert Kolár). The previously unthinkable possibility that the author of a literary text could be a “thinking machine” (Roman Jakobson) has suddenly become a reality.

However, many members of the literary community find it difficult to accept a similar thesis about the authorial role of AI and raise a number of objections. Can we continue to hold to a textual definition of literary work if it means depriving humans of the privilege of being the creator? Or does such a privilege appear to be a construction, and will it need to be reconsidered based on, among other things, Latourian conceptions of networks?

Depending on our theoretical and conceptual foundation, as well as our understanding of LLM and AI, we can answer the question of authorship in the age of AI in many different ways. We can welcome the new authorial practices and see AI as a form of mechanical assistance in the creative process. Or we can see the contribution of AI as an authorial achievement in its own right and reduce the role of the human author to one of many stimuli. We can also rely on the problem of copyright law in addressing authorship and, in a simplistic way, give credit primarily to the developer of the AI tool in question.

Selected points:

**The author as *auctoritas*.** In some views, the author is taken as a guarantor of certain qualities of the text (truthfulness, validity, plausibility, authenticity, relevance, etc.). How does AI change the view of the author as *auctoritas*? How does the authorial stake of AI come into play? Is such a conception of the author an appropriate alternative to the textual conception of authorship? The demand for a guarantee of the author’s moral credibility is encountered both in literature and in internet culture. Could the AI revolution provide an opportunity to return to a more (intelligible) common concept of authorship?

**Human culture, inhumanity, and dialogue.** Karel Piorecký and Zuzana Husárová (2024), along with other authors, state that the LLM training corpus is an “incarnation of tradition” – if that is indeed the most appropriate term. Does AI in literature mean only a new writing tool, or is something new happening? For example, is there a transformation of human culture, an imperceptible alienation of the human experience, or a transformation of the human condition? Is AI an opportunity to deepen the dialogue with our own culture and to develop the “networked” nature of the literary process, or is there a danger of flattening or reducing

culture based on synthetic data of training corpuses and predominantly English-language texts?

**Anthropomorphization.** How biased is our tendency to approach AI models as humans? Communication with LLMs often encounters the issue of personified questions and prompts. These can be seen as the limits of human communication with the LLM (prompts do not always allow us to use all the possibilities of the model; they give the illusion that the AI does not “know” something, even though not knowing is determined by the form and limits of the question). At the same time, however, the LLM can be seen more as a media environment, and personified prompts are a necessary form of communicative activity. In this sense, a LLM contains nothing more than responses to human stimuli, because only these produce responses, out of the unformed material of cultural memory in a dialogical constellation.

**Authenticity and anxiety of manipulation.** Current language models operate in an opaque way (“Black Box”), in contrast to, for example, older combinatorial models, which can be seen as a generalization of some practices in the experimental literature. This, for example, raises the possibility of simulating human authenticity, leaving readers unsure whether they are reading a human utterance or a simulation that is not grounded in human experience. Can the concept of inauthenticity be sufficient here, as it is to a certain extent described in the critique of the novel by Alena Morštajnová, in which the critic Eva Klíčová compares the inauthenticity of the text with the creations of AI? Or, are we reading the texts of a non-human entity that more or less successfully simulates human ways of perceiving and experiencing and can also change them? Is the anxiety that such reasoning may provoke a justified reaction, or is it due to an inadequate understanding of a process in which neural networks are merely a tool?

**AI as an author.** The possibilities of AI-assisted creation raise a range of questions. What role does generative AI play in the creative process? Can AI be a creative entity? If so, how can it enrich us? How do humans plan to respond to the potential loss of their privileged position as creators? Could a symbiotic relationship with AI be the logical culmination of humanity’s previous development? What will be the practical consequences of GenAI taking on the role of precarious workers in creative fields, including fiction writing?

**Literary Reflections.** The advent of AI is reflected not only in scientific writing but also in artistic creation. The thematization of authorship is very common, as we can see in the texts of Ai Jiang, Sean Michaels, and Liza Genart. How do these works address the issue of authorship? Are they a reflection of the current state of affairs or a shift in the dialogue? Moreover, for which readers are they intended?

**Delay.** The development of AI is currently very rapid, so reflection on its possibilities always seems somewhat delayed in relation to the current state of affairs. Are there any other significant changes in the concepts of authorship in recent times? What role does theoretical reflection play in this state of permanent delay? Does it create any new conditions for human culture and human activity?

We welcome proposals/abstracts for articles for a special issue of *World Literature Studies*, up to 300 words in length, by **June 30, 2026**. Authors will be notified of acceptance by **August 31, 2026**, along with details on the format of the texts.

Articles should be up to 36,000 characters in length, including spaces. The deadline for submitting completed articles is **January 31, 2027**. The WLS issue should be published by the end of **September 2027**.

Please send the proposals to the editors and the journal to: [josef.hrdlicka@ff.cuni.cz](mailto:josef.hrdlicka@ff.cuni.cz); [eva.krasova@ff.cuni.cz](mailto:eva.krasova@ff.cuni.cz); and in copy to [usvlwlit@savba.sk](mailto:usvlwlit@savba.sk).

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