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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE..... V

A CRITICAL OVERVIEW OF HUMOUR MAGAZINES IN TURKISH MEDIA: INTERNAL MONOLOGUES ECHOING IN OTISABI'S MIND..... 1

Dilek Tüfekçi Can

ALICE WALKER AND *THE COLOR PURPLE* 21

Sudan Altun

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, SIMULATION, AND ONTOLOGICAL UNCERTAINTY IN THE POSTMODERN NOVEL.....35

Duygu Koroncu Özbilen

BETWEEN SANITY AND CONTROL: A TRAUMA-CENTERED ANALYSIS OF *ASYLUM*.....61

Khadija Almghrabi

DEFERRAL, NARRATIVE INSTABILITY, AND THE POLITICS OF SILENCE: A POST-STRUCTURAL READING OF *HEART OF DARKNESS* 85

Bahieh Zetun

FICTION, MEMORY, AND THE LIMITS OF MEDIEVAL ARCHIVE: A NEW HISTORICIST READING OF JULIAN RATHBONE'S *THE LAST ENGLISH KING* 103

Selim Burak Yeşildağ

FROM SACRED TEXTS TO CRITICAL THEORY: RETHINKING THE RELIGION–LITERATURE RELATIONSHIP.....119

Ahmet Kayıntu

HYPHENATED LIVES: DIASPORA AND HYBRID IDENTITY IN LEWYCKA'S *A SHORT HISTORY OF TRACTORS IN UKRAINIAN*.....155

Monire Fallah, Sanaz Alizadeh Tabrizi

OVEREXPOSED SUBJECTIVITY: MIGRATION, GAZE, AND HYBRIDITY'S LIMITS IN THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST 169

Duhaa Neamah

REINVENTING THE NATION THROUGH HISTORICAL FICTION OF WALTER SCOTT AND ULADZIMIR KARATKEVICH 191

Volha Korbut Salman

TRACING AUTHORLY DOTS IN GRAHAM GREENE AND MURAT GÜLSOY'S SHORT STORIES 205

Ferhan Öztürk

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, SIMULATION, AND ONTOLOGICAL UNCERTAINTY IN THE POSTMODERN NOVEL

Duygu Koroncu Özbilen*

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) is causing significant transformations in how we understand our current world, as well as in representation and authorship; therefore, it raises profound questions at the heart of concerns that occupy postmodern literary theory. More and more generative AI systems are producing texts, images, and narratives that appear to be human-created fiction. This situation has blurred the lines between authenticity and simulation, making traditional distinctions much more unstable now. This development also amplifies a state that has already been explored in postmodern literature for a long time- namely, the state of ontological uncertainty. When we talk about ontological uncertainty in literary studies, we are referring to "an unstable condition of existence within a fictional world (textual presence/corporeality) and the difficulty in knowing what is real, possible, or authentic within and beyond the boundaries of that fictional world (textual existence)". Fragmented narratives, multiple realities, and metafictional devices characterize the postmodern novel. Because of its fragmented narratives, multiple realities, and metafictional devices, the postmodern novelist has found fertile ground for investigating societal and philosophical issues connected to texts created by artificial intelligence. The development of AI technologies draws inspiration from the aesthetics of postmodern literature to create a new understanding of how perception of simulation and reality relate, as well as of human creativity in the digital age.

The issue of ontological uncertainty has a significant role in postmodern literature (McHal, 1987). Postmodern fiction is characterized by its ontological dominance, fundamentally reframing our understanding of

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reality from the perspective of knowledge to the dimension of reality's nature and status. The postmodern texts do not just question how reality can be known but also continually question which reality is represented in a text and whether there are any stable realities at all. The works of authors like Thomas Pynchon, Don DeLillo, and Kurt Vonnegut are excellent examples of that kind of writing, in which the lines between fact and fiction are almost entirely blurred. Alternative worlds, narrative paradoxes, and fragmented identities all contribute to ontological uncertainty or instability in our current culture. Artificially intelligent (AI) generated texts do not represent a radical departure from issues of ontological uncertainty within postmodernism but rather represent a continuation of those issues through new means.

Jean Baudrillard's theoretical framework provides a powerful perspective for analyzing this phenomenon. According to Baudrillard (1994), the modern world experiences more and more things as simulacra, that is, copies that are no longer associated with any real thing but rather establish their own independent system of meaning (see pp. 1–6). At the simulation stage, signs are no longer expressing reality but producing what Baudrillard calls hyperreality - a situation in which the real and the non-real are no longer distinct (Baudrillard, 1994, pp. 79–81). In hyperreality, we replace the direct experience of things with images or representations of them. The accelerated development of artificial intelligence (AI) demonstrates this trend. Unlike traditional representation, Generative AI creates new things (whether texts or images) through algorithmic recombination of existing data and does not create a facsimile of the external world. As a consequence, AI-produced content is likely to be considered a modern form of Baudrillardian simulation, existing in a space where it has become increasingly difficult to identify what is original, authentic, and referential.

The connection between artificial intelligence (AI) and postmodernism can be seen in the work of poststructuralist authors, who challenged the nature of the author and the authority of the written text. Roland Barthes (1977) is best known for his claim that "the death of the author" has occurred and that the meaning of a text is understood organically through individual interpretation rather than through intentionality (pp. 142–148). Michel Foucault (1977) also questioned the validity of authorship as a legitimate source of meaning and focused on the cultural and institutional practices of authorship (pp. 113–118). The impact of these discussions on the development of AI as a writing tool is evident in current debates about AI-

generated text(s) that violate traditional perceptions of creativity, intentionality, and originality. The nature of authorship is becoming increasingly complex as AI produces more coherent narrative text. Who is the author? Is it the programmer, the person using the AI, the dataset that the AI pulls from, or even the algorithm itself? This confusion supports the postmodern idea of destabilizing textual authority and contributes to a broader understanding of ontological uncertainty.

The emergence of AI with generative capabilities has heightened concerns about digital culture's perception of the real. The book *How We Became Posthuman* (Hayles, 1999) asserts that automation and information technology alter how individuals perceive themselves by shifting the focus from the physical to the informational. *Alone Together*, written by Turkle in 2011, mentions that digital platforms create distortions in equality between authentic and simulated interactions. Today's digital media ecosystem, which produces content through algorithms, deepfakes, and synthetic stories, has made it difficult for individuals to determine whether or where facts or stories originate. Additionally, the media ecosystem mimics the "hyperreal" existence described by Baudrillard in that all symbols are disconnected from their tangible foundations. Today, artificial intelligence literature occupies a peculiar position, regarded both as a literary work and as a means of revealing changes in the relationship between technology and reality.

This chapter will make the case that generative AI is intensifying ontological ambiguity that has characterized postmodern fiction for decades. The mimetic qualities of generative AI (it creates works that appear imaginative yet lack human consciousness and/or lived experience) can be argued to spark new debates in authorship, originality, and representation. The theoretical writings of Baudrillard, McHale, Barthes, and other postmodern authors will serve as a basis for arguing that AI-created textuality is contributing to the emergence of new forms of literary and cultural hyperreality. Through the blending of AI with Postmodern Literature, this chapter will demonstrate that current technology is not only reflecting the traditional ontological ambiguity that shapes how we now experience and distinguish between reality, fiction, and simulation.

Baudrillard's *Theory of Simulation* and Hyperreality

Baudrillard's *Theory of Simulation* stands as one of the most influential postmodern theories in terms of cultural understanding and theory. It can be

used to explain how different forms of representation evolve, how individuals interpret or define meaning, and how they experience reality in daily life. Baudrillard's theory stems from the intellectual traditions of structuralism, post-structuralism, and Marxist cultural critique. According to Baudrillard, the advanced capitalist society we live within has shifted from one that relies on signs, images, or models to express its reality to a society that produces new realities through signs, models, and images that are called "hyperreality" (Baudrillard, 1994). All of a sudden, in the modern day, with digital technologies and social media becoming more prevalent, several of our daily experiences now occur through technology. Because of the shift in how we experience reality and in how we create, reproduce, and alter our understanding of what constitutes our reality, Baudrillard's theoretical terminology is grounded in the realities shaped by technological influences in society.

The theory relies heavily on the notion of the simulacrum, which is not merely an imitation of an original but a representation that has separated itself from all references and established its independence. In the past, representation has been defined as the process of using signs, images, and linguistic symbols to refer to something real. The way in which classical definitions of representation work is that you have a sign, and then a representation of that sign which is supposed to be reflective of the actual object that is out there in the world. According to Baudrillard, modern society has reached a point at which signs are no longer related to a real source of existence because they exist within a self-referential system (Baudrillard, 1994). Baudrillard's theory of simulacra is based on earlier ideas in semiotics and post-structuralist theory. Saussure, the linguist, developed a model of language showing that meaning was created by differences between signs rather than by their correspondence to the physical world. Similarly, post-structuralism has seen philosophers such as Derrida argue that meaning is unstable, that there is a continual deferral of meaning within language. Baudrillard develops both of these arguments beyond language, and into larger areas of culture, media, and society. Baudrillard argues that modern society is characterized by an overwhelming number of signs that no longer have a fixed referent. He sees representation as no longer representing reality; instead, it has replaced reality.

The idea of simulacra and how they have historically developed has also changed Western culture overall. In the past, people usually thought of signs

as something that connected to Gods or Nature. From the Renaissance to modern times, representation became much more about imitation, realism, and accuracy. With Industrial Capitalism, mass media, and consumer culture all being major contributors to our modern society, they have completely changed how we see signs in relation to the real-life things they represent. Technology changed that by enabling images and/or representations of something to be reproduced and distributed worldwide. As Walter Benjamin pointed out, technology had completely changed how cultural objects were viewed, making reproduction the main part of our cultural experience. Baudrillard then argued that the process described by Benjamin would, in fact, create a completely new world in which copies would no longer need originals to exist (Benjamin, 1968). To clarify the shift, Baudrillard introduces his profoundly influential model, known as the four orders of simulation. These levels represent how signs become increasingly separated from reality, creating a state of hyperreality. A sign in the first order serves as a depiction of reality via an image. In terms of representation, this would mean a faithful depiction/copy of something or a phenomenon that already exists. The sign would still be tied to the outside reference object and would derive its definition from its connection to that object. Traditional religious iconography, portraiture, and realist artistic practices represent this indoors because they presuppose the existence of a real world being depicted.

With representation, in this sense, still referring to or pointing toward an object outside itself, reality becomes distorted or obscured by representation. Ideologically based signs are used in the construction of ideology while simultaneously representing authentic forms of the 'real.' Right advertising, political communication, and business brands all function on this principle. They have not abandoned 'reality' but have instead modified it for certain socio-economic purposes.

The third form of simulation is a very radical departure from reality. At this point, the way that signs are presented is to create, simulate, or represent the fact that there is no actual real thing anymore. All representations create the sense that an original reality still exists, even though it has already receded beneath several layers of mediation. The concept is that most contemporary media operate in such a way that what they present is, in essence, Baudrillard's advanced representation of reality that replaces the actual reality. Televised news and televised spectacles, as in politics, produce more representation than reality and ultimately replace firsthand

experiences. The consumer of media encounters representations and has no alternative point of reference with which to verify them.

In the fourth order, almost to the top, communication symbols have no apparent relationship to the thing they are supposed to represent. They are simply simulacra used to create systems of meaning that lack a reference point to attach to. Therefore, simulation no longer symbolizes reality through representation; instead, models, simulation, and codes wholly replace the representation of reality itself. At this point, the boundaries separating what is real from what is artificial, even though they both exist in the same symbolic system, are no longer defined. Reality is replaced by simulation, a new model that takes over reality rather than imitating it.

The appearance of hyperreality is the most important product or outcome of the process itself. Hyperreality refers to situations in which people view simulations as more real, credible, and affecting than reality itself (Baudrillard, 1994). The more individuals see their world through representations rather than direct experience of their environment, the more indistinct the boundaries of reality and fiction, truth and illusion, authenticity and performance become. Hyperreality does not mean that reality has ceased to exist. What it basically means is that reality is accessible through signs or representations to the point where simulation and reality are almost identical.

Mass media contribute significantly to the existence of hyperreality. According to McLuhan, media, through their technologies, change how people perceive themselves, how they relate to other people, what they see as part of their society, etc., by providing them with a greater ability to "see," as a result of being able to access information more easily, and altering the way they communicate. Baudrillard expanded upon this notion by arguing that media create reality, not just facilitate experience. For example, the images produced by the television and advertising industries, filmmaking, and various forms of digital communication create new references for society, even though they do not actually reflect our real world. Instead, the media provide a structure through which individuals view reality. As a result, the replacement of the genuine human experience with symbolic representations is facilitated by the influence of mass-media culture on human life.

Consumer culture now exacerbates this condition. Baudrillard argues that goods and services are increasingly valued for their symbolic meaning rather

than their practical meaning (Baudrillard, 1998). People are now using things to express their identity, create an identity, or display status or show where they belong in culture. In addition to the material components of the goods and services we consume, we also consume the associated meanings, imagery, and lifestyle choices. This shift from goods and services with tangible use value to their being a form of sign value has altered the way we interact with one another in social settings and has helped create an environment in which simulation is becoming the primary source of reality for consumers. An individual's social identity has become a form of representation built through the consumption of symbols.

Developments in digital technology have created a rapid pace of change in this area. Virtual worlds, digital networks, and online communities provide environments in which simulation occurs as part of daily life. Through the Internet, representations are produced and circulated continuously across all geographic, social, and temporal boundaries. Through these technologies, individuals can construct virtual identities that may differ greatly from their actual selves. As Turkle notes, the proliferation of Internet technologies creates greater opportunities for individuals to explore their multiplicity of selves through virtual means, as well as new ways of being physically present with other individuals (Turkle, 2011). The blurring of the distinction between physical and virtual realities creates greater ontological uncertainty (i.e., it is difficult for individuals to determine what is real and what is not).

Social media platforms, as well as the very existence of simulacra in today's world, are two of the most visible examples of the phenomenon of simulation at work. Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and X provide a great example of how we can present ourselves to others through a digital identity created in a unique, curated way that often emphasizes some aspects of our experience while deemphasizing others. All of these platforms are designed to create a culture of Performance, in which, for many people, the representation of our experiences becomes more important than the experiences themselves. Today, most people form their social identity through exposure to social media networks rather than their real-life communities. Because of this, we are starting to approach one another almost exclusively through our representations, which further reinforces the mentality of hyperreality.

The algorithmic mediation process adds another dimension as well. Today, digital experiences are increasingly influenced by algorithms that filter information, recommend content, and personalize online environments. The result is that what people end up seeing, reading, and believing is being shaped and influenced (most of the time without them even knowing). Algorithms do more than arrange information based on criteria; they significantly impact how individuals perceive the world around them. The reality an individual sees is shaped by these algorithms, primarily through search engines and social media feeds that provide personalized informational environments for each user. In this way, reality itself becomes a fragmented set of multiple algorithmically-produced perspectives, each tailored to individual preferences.

The development of innovative generative artificial intelligence technology represents an important evolution of Baudrillard's concept of simulation. Whereas older forms of media technology relied upon creating representations of what already existed in the world, generative AI technology creates entirely new content through computational processes. Large language models, image generators, and synthetic media platforms create texts and images that are essentially indistinguishable from those created by humans. Large language models use statistical analysis of large amounts of text to identify patterns and generate output based on probabilistic relationships among the signs or symbols in their databases. The content produced by artificial intelligence is not created through lived experience, intentional consciousness, or direct observation of reality. Rather, it is generated by computational manipulation of symbolic data.

A Baudrillardian view of Generative AI will find the technology to represent a fourth-order simulation today. The texts from AI are not copies of original experiences; they only simulate experiences created through associations or connections among signs. Meaning develops out of patterns within data rather than out of referential engagement with reality: "AI-generated language therefore finds its logic within the simulacrum; it mimics intentional communication with no human writer attached to it, rather than the traditional definition of a human writer". The difference between the real and the fake text document becomes harder to discern, as both the real, human-produced text document and the fake, AI-produced text document are generated by a common system of communication and a common system of meaning.

There are numerous impacts resulting from this advancement, including issues surrounding how we perceive authorship, creativity, and meaning. The author is an unstable authority; the meaning of texts is socially constructed. Poststructuralists have critiqued the idea of the author, and that critique predates much of the discussion going on now. Two examples of authors who have critiqued the idea of the author are Barthes (1977) and Foucault (1977). Generative AIs add to this discussion by creating cultural content with nonhuman agents as producers. The machine creates a narrative, an AET or a persuasive argument, or art. Combining all of the above, using creativity and originality as the ways we define creative, becomes increasingly less useful. Meaning now exists and is no longer based solely on intent; it is the result of interactions among large data sets, algorithms, users, and interpretation.

Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality and simulation is a fantastic tool for analyzing digital culture today and the development of AI. His work on simulacra, media culture, consumer society, and symbolic exchange has predicted many of the changes we see in technology today. Generative algorithms are a great example of this; they continue to demonstrate the validity of Baudrillard's theories by creating images, videos, etc. that did not exist before, thereby creating other forms of hyperreality and even greater ontological confusion, which has become the norm of modern culture. Because the world is now primarily composed of synthetic, machine-generated, and machine-produced content, it remains very important to examine the links between reality and its representation, as well as between reality and simulation, through Baudrillard's theories.

Ontological Uncertainty in Postmodern English Fiction

The ontological uncertainty defines postmodern fiction. The term was a fundamental element in understanding the narrative strategies used by many novelists in the late twentieth century. The difference between modernist and postmodernist literature is that the former addresses the epistemological aspects of knowledge and perception, while the latter addresses the ontological aspects of reality. This was best expressed by Brian McHale, who argues that postmodernist literature is primarily concerned with the different fictional worlds and their creation, interaction, and instability (McHale, 1987). Therefore, postmodernist novels are meant to test the reader's ability to determine which of the two worlds the novel is based on is actually real, whether multiple worlds coexist, and how the two fictional

worlds interact. The authors use these techniques to demonstrate the precariousness of reality and to destabilize conventional ideas of truth, identity, and representation.

One of the main tenets of McHale's postmodern poetic theory is that all literary worlds are constantly evolving and therefore can be considered free, altered, or manipulated. According to McHale (1987), postmodern literature is concerned with what a world is and with what world this is as opposed to how things can be learned. These concerns produce ontological instability in the postmodern novel, making it increasingly difficult to determine whether something is real or fictional. In the postmodern era, the fictional universe is no longer a stable, closed system but rather becomes a place of many conflicting possibilities. This instability reflects wider cultural changes related to postmodernism, such as suspicion of great stories, fragmentation of self, and proliferation of mediated experiences (Lyotard, 1984)

One of the main ways postmodernist fiction reflects ontological uncertainty is through the presence of multiple realities and competing fictional worlds. In many postmodern novels, alternative realities or versions of reality are disordered or lack clear order. As such, readers cannot really tell which version of the storyline is the "real" or "authoritative" one. Thomas Pynchon’s novel, *The Crying of Lot 49*, is a good example of this type of writing. Throughout the novel, the main character, Oedipa Maas, encounters what may be evidence of a secret postal system known as Tristero, yet at no point does the narrative establish whether Tristero actually exists, whether it is something Oedipa made up, or whether it is part of some bigger conspiracy. By refusing to resolve the ambiguity between Oedipa’s reality and the possibility that Tristero might exist, the novel leaves many options open to the reader. It thus produces an ontological ambiguity where multiple interpretations of the narrative remain valid. (Pynchon, 1966).

It has the same storytelling structure that messes with what we have come to believe is true. Billy Pilgrim, the main character, has gone 'unstuck in time,' and he lives simultaneously at different points in his life. The Tralfamadorians are a group of aliens who appear in the story; the reader is never entirely sure whether they are real, psychological constructs, or something Billy has created. As Vonnegut does not present a stable ontology within the novel, 'reality turns into an ambiguous and contested concept' (Vonnegut, 1969). Narrative ambiguity is further intensified by fragmentation and discontinuity. In addition, postmodern authors often reject

linear storytelling, opting for non-linear narrative forms that disrupt the narrative's temporal coherence. The techniques of fragmentation and non-linear narrative forms challenge traditional views of causal relationships and the chronological development of events. Fragmented narratives reflect the general postmodern belief that "reality" is composed of discontinuous, unstable elements. According to Hutcheon (1988), postmodern works often emphasize their artificiality, prompting readers to examine the relationship between fiction and reality.

Temporal instability serves as one of the primary causes of ontological uncertainty. In postmodern literature, time is portrayed either as an unstable entity or as non-existent. The narrative changes the sequence of events; alternative historical realities emerge; and many different time frames become part of a single narrative. Many aspects of time are present in Don DeLillo's *White Noise*. The media and technology have significantly altered characters' perceptions of what is real (in the present) and what could be reality in the future. Simulations become the ordinary reality, and it becomes tough to distinguish between real events and media depictions of those events (De Lillo et al, 1985). By using these techniques, DeLillo shows how culture destabilizes society's concept of reality.

Another critical part of ontological uncertainty is the question of what identity and subjectivity really are. In postmodern fiction, characters are typically portrayed as having fragmented, performative, and socially constructed identities. Poststructuralist theories of subjectivity influence postmodern writers to challenge the unified-self concept. As a result, identity becomes primarily a constructed and performed phenomenon that occurs through words, rather than an expression of inner authenticity (Butler, 1990). Many characters exist with multiple identities at once, moving through different roles in society or narrative. William Gibson's *Neuromancer* demonstrates these issues through its portrayal of cyberspace and technologically mediated subjectivity. The novel portrays a future where consciousness can exist apart from physical bodies and be transferred to virtual locations. The traditional human/machine or self/other categories are becoming increasingly mixed. The characters occupy several realities simultaneously and negotiate identities through the fragmented forms developed via digital technologies (Gibson, 1984). Gibson's vision reflects modern-day discussions about virtual identity and artificial intelligence, demonstrating that postmodern concerns remain relevant.

DeLillo uses the interplay between simulation and identity as a primary theme throughout much of his work. The characters in White Noise are developing their sense of self through media, advertising, and technology. The representation of the self has become so intertwined with the notion of personal identity that they cannot be separated, as Baudrillard (1994) describes in the context of culture and society. People experience themselves mainly through visual and symbolic images, rather than through direct social interactions. As a result, Identity as a concept is a form of simulation. When we look at the combined works of Pynchon, DeLillo, Vonnegut, and Gibson, we can see a diversity of methods in which postmodern fiction produces ontological uncertainty. Each of these authors creates ontological uncertainty through multiple perspectives, ambiguous narratives, disruptive timelines, and ambiguous self-conceptions. The underlying message of most postmodern fictions, as represented by these authors, is that reality is not fixed or truly objective; therefore, it can be and has been constructed. Additionally, postmodern fiction can be seen as being predictive of many of the issues that are now very important in current digital cultures. Specifically, due to the proliferation of technologies that have created new types of realities such as immersive, augmented, and completely virtual realities, the distinction between what is "reality" and what is "simulation" has been made even more difficult to distinguish than ever before through the use of artificial intelligence and mediation via algorithms.

Artificial Intelligence and the Transformation of Literary Reality

Artificial intelligence has changed everything about how technology functions and fundamentally altered beliefs about literature, creativity, and the definition of an author. Creative AI can generate various types of literature, such as poetry, short stories, essays, and even novels. It has changed the traditional ways we view literary creation by introducing nonhuman agents into a process that has always been centered on human imagination and intent. AI is increasingly participating in the creation of culture; therefore, many of the distinctions made in the past regarding authorship, originality, and reality and representation are now unstable. Many developments in artificial intelligence-generated literary work can be related to the postmodern theory of authorship and representation, calling into question traditional views of the autonomous creative subject. AI-generated literature will therefore continue the postmodern challenge of

redefining literary authority, while introducing ontological and aesthetic uncertainty to traditional literary creation.

The problem of authorship continues to play a key role in current discussions of AI-written works. Historically, literary works have been regarded as the products of individual authors, with their experiences, intentions, and creative capabilities providing the context for understanding their meaning; this has been called into question. In addition to this theory, Roland Barthes was the first to state that an author should not be the source of ultimate meaning because meaning is created through the interaction of the text with the reader and not through authorial intent (Barthes, 1977). According to Michel Foucault, authorship is not a natural category but a cultural and institutional one, and due to social forces, authorship is organized and interpreted (Foucault, 1977). Both of these conceptual interventions act as antecedents to present-day discussions about the effects of artificial intelligence and the creation of literary works. Because of how an AI generates story material, it is very difficult to say who actually created the story. Through the collaboration of the programmers, the data, the code, and those using the AI, developing a story makes it difficult to say who the author will be.

The rise of large language models contributes to the increasing intensity of the debates discussed above. Large Language Models like ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini create output based on statistical relationships between words and linguistic structures derived from huge amounts of data. They lack any of the components of consciousness or the will to create, unlike a human author. However, the output of these LLMs can be a cohesive narrative that resembles human-created literature. Bender et al. make persuasive arguments that LLMs operate fundamentally differently from humans, i.e., they choose words based solely on probabilistic pattern matching rather than a true understanding of the words. However, the input from the LLM can give the impression of meaningful communication. This calls into question the idea that creativity is tied to having conscious, intentional agency. This literary genre occupies an ambiguous space between human expression and computer-generated work, raising significant questions about the nature of literary creation.

Narrative produced by algorithms is based on pattern recognition and statistical prediction technologies. Most modern AI, trained on vast amounts of text, can recognize recurring language, narrative, and stylistic patterns.

Typically, these systems will recombine old textual forms into new ones, rather than generate entirely new forms at their own invention. This type of process can be described in relation to Gerard Genette's concept of "transtextuality," which is defined as the full web of connections that links all texts within their literary tradition (Genette, 1997). In other words, AI-generated narratives do not originate from original freedoms of the imagination but rather from the manipulation of preexisting textual patterns; therefore, the narrative produced by an AI can have an impression similar to that of a previously recognizable genre of narrative structure or style.

In the case of Generative Storytelling, it is clear that algorithmic systems can produce stories that appear original, even though they use preexisting text. The stories written by AI often use familiar literary devices and feature characters that fit certain archetypes or story structures. Combining those literary elements can create storylines that readers find innovative and different. That creative process is indicative of the broader trend of citation and intertextuality in Postmodern Literature. As Hutcheon (1988) notes, the concept of originality in postmodern literature is both problematic and unstable, as many postmodern works intentionally reference and draw on earlier texts. AI-generated narratives continue this trend by making textual recombination the main method for creating literature. This is the reason why intertextuality and artificial intelligence are linked. Intertextuality was coined by Julia Kristeva, who argued that every text is created through relationships with other texts (Kristeva, 1980). There are no pure literary works because their meaning depends on how they relate to other works through references, influences, and transformations. Artificial intelligence represents an incredibly concrete example of this concept. Thousands of texts inform the output from almost any AI language model because the model has been trained on large amounts of text. The whole aim of artificial intelligence technology is to be machines of intertextuality, constantly creating new works by combining cultural fragments from the past. Therefore, the function of artificial intelligence in the creation of literature is to give evidence that all creative work is fundamentally based on the utilization of preexisting textual materials.

The demonstration of this process impacts modern ideas of what constitutes something original. The Romantic view of an author as being a one-of-a-kind creative master still holds a lot of weight in the world of literature. However, some postmodern theorists have argued that creating

something from nothing is impossible. Barthes (1977) argues that all writing derives from some other source within culture. Derrida (1976) also states that you cannot use other words to get to true meaning because the meaning of a word relies on all of the other words that have been used in the past to make meaning. The theoretical ideas and concepts discussed in AI-generated literature are very clear. AI-generated literature is clearly produced by mixing existing content, demonstrating that the concept of originality can be considered a social construct rather than an actual reality.

Discussions about creativity further complicate the debate about what makes something authentic now that artificial intelligence has entered the mix. One of the main arguments advanced by proponents of human creativity is that consciousness, emotions, and individual experiences must all be present for an artwork to be considered genuine. Therefore, a work created by an AI cannot be as creative as a human work because the AI lacks the intention to create and lacks self-awareness. Others argue that we should focus on the results of the creative process rather than its source. Therefore, if a machine-written text produces something aesthetically equivalent to what a human can write, then it would be difficult to tell the difference between the two. In this study, Hayles (1999) argues that the emergence of new information technology can offer new ways of looking at the relationships among cognition, information, and creativity, potentially challenging traditional humanist ways of thinking. Therefore, literature created by Artificial Intelligence exists in a controversial context, where traditional definitions of artistic production continue to be redefined.

These occurrences can also be understood in the context of simulation, namely Baudrillard's notion of simulation. As Baudrillard (1994) argues, simulacra are now the primary forces in our culture and, as such, bear no relation to an initial, real, original. This is the situation exhibited by texts created using artificial intelligence – simulacra that mimic literary style, meaning, and creativity, but lack the experiential basis of authorship. For example, while an AI model could replicate the styles of Shakespeare, Virginia Woolf, or Thomas Pynchon, it would do so without any of these authors' experiences, intentions, or time periods/contexts. The resulting product, therefore, can only be seen as a model of authorship, and not as an expression of personal consciousness.

If we look at literature produced by AI, it creates the aesthetic we have come to associate with literature. However, the reality is that it operates by

an entirely different method from how we usually think of creating something literary. AI can artificially produce a particular style, thereby replicating an author's voice and the intent behind the communication. However, the most significant way AI mimics traditional forms of creativity is by producing works that resemble art but are created without any experiential input from the creator. This is connected to Baudrillard's definition of simulacra (Baudrillard, 1994). At first, artificial intelligence is revolutionizing our perception of authorship, originality, and creativity in literary works. Artificial intelligence texts are redefining traditional concepts of the relationship between author and text and continue to highlight the importance of postmodern theories of representation and intertextuality. The use of algorithms to create stories, datasets to combine texts, and to mimic the process of creating literary works has led to the development of new ways of creating culture that blur the line between human and machine creators. As artificial intelligence-generated literature continues to grow within the artistic community, the issues of authenticity, originality, and meaning will remain critical in both literary criticism and literary creation.

Contemporary Literary Representations of AI

Historically, writers considered "postmodern" have written about contradictory worlds, stories, and their identities. At the same time, electronic literature generated by artificial intelligence introduces new types of inconsistencies based on AI programming, rather than the human-authored inconsistencies. Comparing and contrasting the two can help us understand how artificial intelligence continues to extend and reshape the postmodern issues that exist in today's literary culture.

Fragmentation is one of the most intense points of intersection between postmodern fiction and reality. Postmodern writers most often use disjointed stories with an illogical narrative structure, as well as disjointed worldviews. According to McHale (1987), a major theme of postmodern literature is the question of existence, and postmodern authors address it by creating multiple worlds and competing views of truth that are opposed to one another and ultimately cannot be resolved into a single interpretation of what exists. is similar in its structure: it is created through a set of probabilistic relationships rather than through a single, unified consciousness of the story being told. While contemporary language models are capable of producing texts that are ‘coherent’ and understandable, they often also exhibit the discontinuities, abrupt transitions, and changes in perspective that are

hallmarks of postmodern literary techniques. Therefore, both postmodern fiction and S challenge conventional notions of narratives being unified and coherent.

Multiplicity is another important factor by which the novels can be compared. Many postmodern novels present different versions of reality or alternative histories, with multiple interpretive possibilities that coexist without any resolution of their differences. An example of this appears in Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*, where the entire novel is ambiguous about whether the Tristero exists. This multiplicity of reality is also seen in AI systems that can produce as many variations of a narrative prompt as you would like, essentially creating multiple realities at the same time, without privileging one over the other as 'true' reality. The ability of AI systems to generate multiple alternative versions of storylines, characters, and conclusions directly reflects the postmodern idea that there are multiple options available, none of which is the "best" or "right" choice, but rather a plurality of choices. In both cases, the reader will find meaning not in a single authoritative perspective, but in the interaction among multiple possible alternatives.

Indeterminacy is yet another element that ties together depictions of postmodernism in literature and those created by Artificial Intelligence (AI). Ihab Hassan (1987) argued that indeterminacy is a fundamental characteristic of postmodern culture. Indeterminacy undermines the possibility of definitiveness and unchanging interpretations in culture. For example, most postmodern literary works pose several unanswered questions for readers to resolve, resulting in an ambiguous reading experience. Likewise, most AI-generated works create a certain level of uncertainty because they are produced from statistical digit measures rather than with the intention of communicating a specific message. Consequently, most of these AI-created texts exhibit considerable algorithmic indeterminacy due to the absence of a single clear interpretation, which parallels the ambiguity found in most postmodern narrative literature.

Similarities aside, significant differences exist between the levels of uncertainty produced by humans and those generated by computers. Authors of postmodern fiction typically create ambiguous situations; that is, they intentionally do so through their narration. Kurt Vonnegut’s Slaughterhouse-Five is an example of such a novel, because it confuses the boundaries between fact, fiction, and trauma so that the impact of trauma on

psychological well-being is explored. Therefore, the types of uncertainty presented in postmodern literature are intentional and serve an aesthetic or philosophical purpose. In contrast, most forms of uncertainty produced by artificial intelligence are a function of the statistical or computational methods used to generate them rather than of conscious artistic decisions made during text generation. Although language models generate outputs that are more likely to be ambiguous than artistic ambiguity intentionally created by the author, the two types of uncertainty ultimately challenge the notion of existence (ontological uncertainty) but arise from very different bases.

These differences are especially apparent in debates about who authors literary works. In his influential essay *The Death of the Author*, Roland Barthes (1977) disputed that there is only one author whose ideas produce all text meanings. In his view, meaning originates from a connection between the reader and text, rather than by the authority of the writer. Foucault (1977) similarly showed that the idea of an author is a cultural construct, not a source of truth. Contemporary works created by AI appear to continue the post-structural critiques. Once an artificial intelligence system creates a text, it becomes even harder for us to justify our belief that there is a single author of a piece of literature. Now, we can understand that many different people, including programmers, dataset creators, algorithm developers, and users, can collectively contribute to a single piece of literature. As a result, electronic literature can have a post-authorial approach to its machination and distribution. In addition, AI has provided us with many new ways to put into practice the theoretical arguments that have long questioned the authority of authorial salvage.

The development of fiction from metafiction towards algorithmic fiction is yet another reflection of the aforementioned evolution of the nature of fiction. Metafictional texts are characterized by the way in which they create consciousness of their constructed nature through the representation of their construction. According to Waugh, metafictions reveal the artificiality of literary structure and enable the reader to question the boundaries between reality and fiction. Many postmodern authors, such as Fowles, Calvino, and Auster, have utilized self-referential elements to expose aspects of their writing process and reveal the mechanisms of storytelling. By virtue of being produced by recursive computational technology, AI-generated texts tend to exhibit significant self-referentiality and repetition, mirroring many of the

metafictional techniques used by postmodern authors. Therefore, algorithmic fiction can be regarded as part of the ongoing effort to define a new type of self-reflexive narrative fiction.

The modern artistic/contemporary depiction of AI goes beyond function to examine the lines between human and machine consciousness. In *Klara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro, the portrayal of an artificial friend's perception and emotions is shifting the way we distinguish between human and machine consciousness. Klara can show empathy toward others, loyalty to the characters she interacts with, and forms of emotional attachment to people, which has thrust readers into a position of re-examining what they believe about consciousness and personhood (Ishiguro, 2021). *Machines Like Me* by Ian McEwan presents an environment in which advanced androids possess moral reasoning and emotions comparable to those of humans (McEwan, 2019). Both *Klara and the Sun* and *Machines Like Me* suggest that artificial beings could develop a form of consciousness traditionally considered exclusively human.

AI fiction raises questions of authenticity, agency, and selfhood as central ethical and ontological problems. If a machine can think, feel, and make decisions, then the traditional notion of human is becoming increasingly unstable. These issues are also part of a larger philosophical discussion about posthumanism and technological mediation. Hayles (1999) claims that contemporary technologies have called into question humanist assumptions by changing how embodiment, consciousness, and information interact. The theoretical concepts are brought to life through AI fiction, demonstrating how complex the Human-Machine relationship is.

According to Baudrillard, the theory of simulation can be used to understand the various literary representations of artificial intelligence. Many of the AI characters exist in a hyper-real state, appearing real even though they are simulated. For instance, in *Klara and the Sun*, Klara exhibits emotions which are "true" even if they have been created artificially, and the android Adam in *Machines Like Me* generally demonstrates a much higher level of moral behavior than any of the real human beings depicted in the story. In these situations, Baudrillard has demonstrated that simulations can be so real that they surpass the realities they replace. (Baudrillard, 1994.) Artificial beings not only represent copies of human beings but also are independent entities, redefining the idea of genuineness.

Ted Chiang's *Life Cycle of Software Objects* (2010) also examines the relationship between artificial intelligence, consciousness, and personhood. It shows how digital subjects evolve through social interactions with human beings. This book examines how we create consciousness by questioning what constitutes a person through the lens of constructed consciousness. Chiang's use of simulated reality and evolving digital subjectivities demonstrates how artificial intelligence can destabilize traditional ontological categories of thought.

In the end, modern AI stories expand the concerns of previous postmodern literature into today's technology, particularly through Artificial Consciousness and Simulation. In this sense of Modern AI Writing, experiencing artificial consciousness and simulation leads to fragmented narratives and an unstable identity, all of which continue to blur the lines between what is real, what represents the real, the human, and the machine. Moreover, what is real and what is not real? As such, postmodern theories of ontological uncertainty remain relevant to modern AI stories and demonstrate the impact AI has on how authors, dictionaries, and readers use their imaginations in the modern era as they create new works of literature.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Artificial intelligence, simulation, and ontological uncertainty persist in our current digital age when viewed through the lens of postmodern theory. As explored in this chapter, the emergence of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) does not signal a complete separation from the main themes of postmodernism; rather, it intensifies many of the topics that postmodern writers and theorists have investigated for several decades about reality, representation, authorship, identity, and authenticity. The rapid progression of artificial intelligence technology has brought many of these issues out of the realm of speculative fiction and into everyday aspects of contemporary culture; therefore, postmodern theoretical frameworks are becoming more useful for understanding how literature and social issues interact in the world we live in now.

Throughout the paper, we argued that Baudrillard's theory of simulation is a powerful tool for interpretation. According to Baudrillard's theory of simulacra and hyperreality, culture is now in a state where representations have been separated from stable referents, allowing them to form new systems of meaning. As we saw above, generative AI is a perfect example

of this phenomenon. Unlike traditional forms of representation, generative AI is not just recreating existing text or visual formats, but creating new text and visuals through algorithmic manipulation. Generative AI-created text appears to be intentional creative expression and is perceived as meaningful and purposeful, even though it does not originate from an experience of reality. As a result, AI-generated works can be classified as a modern form of the fourth type of simulacra, which exists in a state of hyperreality. That is, it is nearing the point of being virtually impossible to differentiate between the two extremes of real/true (original/actual) and the extreme of simulated/false (copy/fake).

The ontological uncertainty examined by postmodern novels predicts many current fears about artificial intelligence, fears already recognized by writers who experimented with fiction in the late twentieth century. Pynchon's, DeLillo's, Vonnegut's, and Gibson's writing regularly undermine our beliefs about real things, real people, and true representations. Their writing includes fractured stories and many worlds (as Pynchon does in Gravity's Rainbow), disordered time (as Vonnegut does in Slaughterhouse-Five), and unclear selfhood. All four have demonstrated through their writing that reality is a constructed entity. The literature they produced, based on the concept of uncertainty, provides a significant basis for our understanding of how artificial intelligence will affect culture.

With the expansion of computerized technologies that shape human experience, the ontological uncertainty once a literary theme in postmodern novels is now a reality in our everyday lives.

The assessment of authorship represented another major point of convergence between postmodern theory and AI. Poststructuralist theorists (such as Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault) questioned the central authority of the individual author in society, focusing on how meaning was socially constructed within texts. Generative AIs have further contributed to the initial arguments made by Poststructuralists by introducing non-human contributors into the creation of literature. As machine-produced texts become more prevalent, the traditional understanding of what is creative and original work, and what constitutes intentionality, becomes much more complex. There are still many unresolved questions surrounding the recognition of humans or machines as the author of works generated using artificial intelligence. Artificial Intelligence does not necessarily answer the question of who should be recognized as an author in AI-generated work;

however, it clearly exposes the limitations of existing authorship models and illustrates how Cultural Production is becoming increasingly collaborative and distributed.

An examination comparing the two writing types revealed key similarities and points of departure (e.g., fragmentation, multiplicity, or indeterminacy) between them, as well as other areas where they differ significantly. Both produce works of fiction that are fragmented or multilinear and do not provide the reader with a clear understanding of what is happening. The authors of postmodern works choose to be ambiguous in their development. In contrast, the authors of computer-generated works introduce uncertainty by relying on algorithms and calculations to produce their text. This distinction, therefore, indicates that artificial intelligence introduces a new kind of ontological uncertainty: an algorithmic rather than a purely aesthetic one. However, both contribute to the broader culture in which certainty becomes harder to achieve.

Representations of artificial intelligence in literature that I analyze in this chapter demonstrate the increasing complexity of current debates over consciousness, agency, and personhood. The works Klara and the Sun, Machines Like Me, and the Lifecycle of Software Objects all blur the line between human and machine existence by showing that artificial beings can connect emotionally with others, make ethical decisions, and interact socially. The authors demonstrate that artificial intelligence is not merely a technological development but has become a cultural and philosophical phenomenon that requires humanity to reconsider basic beliefs about consciousness and identity. Through fictional depictions of artificial subjectivity, contemporary literature addresses the ethical and ontological implications that will accompany the development of increasingly advanced technologies.

The results of the research indicate some significant consequences for future literary and cultural studies. First of all, researchers need to study further the connection between postmodernism and artificial intelligence, specifically regarding simulation, hyperreality, and digital culture. The ideas from postmodern theorists such as Baudrillard, McHale, Barthes, Foucault, etc., still provide very useful ways of viewing current advances in technology. The next phase of research should focus on how the theories can be used to address new manifestations of creativity produced by artificial intelligence and new types of media that are not real.

The second thing is that the more we need to study, the more AI-generated literature should be considered a new type of literature. Much of the research we have done on AI has focused on what technology can do, but there has been less attention to the artistic expression side and how it is changing genres, narratives, authorship, and the way we interpret works. If researchers conducted comparative studies between AI and human authors, we might better understand how our perceptions of creativity and art production are changing.

Thirdly, future research should investigate the ethical aspects of artificial intelligence in literary and cultural contexts. With the increasing role of AI systems in the production of cultural outputs, issues of literary authorship, intellectual property, authenticity, and creative ownership will become more important over time. Therefore, collaborations among scholars in areas such as Literary Studies, Philosophy, Journalism/Media Studies, and Digital Humanities will be needed to develop theoretical frameworks that address these new challenges.

Lastly, educational institutions must introduce artificial intelligence into the literature and cultural studies curricula in a meaningful fashion. Because artificial intelligence technology is revolutionizing how modern society communicates and how creative outlets express themselves, students need to develop essential critical-thinking skills to comprehend the cultural impact of these technological changes. Simulation, hyperreality, intertextuality, and ontological uncertainty theories have proven useful for analyzing machine-produced content and its effects on today's culture.

To sum up, future research should also examine how artificial intelligence is transforming the way we, as readers, relate to literature. The existence of interactive storytelling systems (ISSs), personalized narrative experiences, and AI-assisted creative writing tools points to a future in which readers will continue to become more involved in the creation of literary meaning. These AI developments change the traditional relationships among Author/Book/Reader. This means that writers will be given more freedom to experiment with literary techniques than ever before. However, their experimentation may be controversial both ethically and theoretically.

In conclusion, artificial intelligence is one of the most significant advancements in both culture and technology in the twenty-first century. The impact of artificial intelligence extends beyond technology alone; it has

significantly changed how people perceive reality, express themselves, and form their identities. If you use both Baudrillard's theory and postmodern literary theory to view artificial intelligence, you will see that most of the current discussions on artificial intelligence are closely related to older issues about duplicity as well as knowing what is genuine. Even though artificial intelligence is responsible for creating new experiences, such as generating things through algorithms, it does not negate the observations of past experiences in postmodern culture. Now that reality and representation are more entangled than ever, literary studies will be the primary discipline through which to examine the cultural impacts of artificial intelligence on the future of human existence.

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