AUGUSTINE AND THE POSTHUMAN WRITER: TOWARD AN AMBIGUOUS AUTHORSHIP IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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ABSTRACT

This article explores emerging hybrid ontologies of the posthuman in the context of generative AI technologies and their impact on writing practices. We should regard arguments mobilizing fear of AI-assisted or -generated writing as based on misguided anxieties about the potentials of human creative acts and man/machine hybrid creations (what this article refers to as a model of "weak authorship"). A reading of St. Augustine's *Confessions*, a key work in the Judeo-Christian tradition, shows how an early Christian humanist text can give us a model for understanding paternalist structures that place human authorship and human creators within a hierarchy of creation, where the transcendental and divine is identified as the highest source of creation, and where the "human creator" must seek legitimation and authorization from that higher power to create in the first place. The article explores creativity through the concept of *ambiguity*, speculating on the extent to which AI and human authorship might be combined and to what extent such hybrid forms might impact our understanding of human creativity. As generative technologies continue to be integrated into our lifeworld, we should develop a strong account of authorship that embraces the concept of ambiguity as a means of orienting ourselves toward a nondualist ontology of becoming.

KEYWORDS

ambiguity, artificial intelligence, augustine, authorship, writing

The emerging field of aesthetics exploring the posthuman emphasizes that as we become less certain about what form the human will take in the future, we are also called on to adapt to new forms of ambiguity that cause us to reject

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dualism and embrace new forms of plurality (Sorgner 2023).[1] Digitization in our lifeworld and in the field of creative production forces us to confront emerging forms of technology in order to address the ambiguities of new hybrid tech/human creations. Posthumanist aesthetics builds both on twentieth-century postmodernist ontology and on aesthetics, which sought to overcome conventional dualistic distinctions by removing "the artist" and "the author" from their creative product and replacing the category of "artwork" with more fluid categories such as "happening," "experimentation," or "event" (Lyotard 1984).[2] In addition to making ontological arguments about the relationship of a "creator" to an artistic or creative product, postmodernists and posthumanists also examine the way in which knowledge and artworks are controlled and regulated within the sociopolitical domain. Both traditional postmodernists and scholars of posthumanism prefer collective to individualist-oriented or "creator-centered" models of creation, refusing hierarchical relations of ownership and possession.[3]

Postmodernists place a specific value on understanding how creative products can be catalogued in the general "order of things" so that they can be made intelligible for both scientific knowledge and philosophical reflection (Foucault 1989, 12).[4] Generative AI technologies represent a turning point in human–technological orientation. No longer merely tools understood through the Promethean model, these technologies, which generate and "produce," pose challenges to our capacity to control and catalogue artistic representations. For some, this poses a threat to the human capacity to create from needs and desires that are specifically structured around human experience, such as lack, shame, or drives that are psychically and libidinally constituted. Both Freud and Nietzsche, for example, saw in the act of creation a drive linked to the need to "sublimate" or "overcome" either unconscious drives or the state of being all too human—a feature of experience denied to neural networks (Freud 2010). For Nietzsche, this was part of redirecting libidinal drives into creative ones, finding perhaps its most apposite expression in the aphorism that to make "music is another way of making children" (Nietzsche 1888, 14[117], KSA 13.295).[5] For posthumanists, however, embracing these new technologies as co-producers of knowledge does not necessarily mean denying the human experience, nor arguing for the "superiority" of AI over carriers of human genomes.[6] Instead, scholarship focused on the relationship between generative AI and creativity attempts to revisit anthropocentric models based both in "physical" and "symbolic" violence in order to determine the future outlines of the "human" and to challenge structures of paternalism (Kalpokiene and Kalpokas, 2023).

Predicting the upheaval that dispersive technologies like generative AI would bring about in the organization of society, the philosopher–psychoanalyst duo Deleuze and Guattari draw a distinction between what they call "primitive

machines," which they characterize as instruments organizing organic production flows according to the logic of "segmentation" that preserves genealogical hierarchies (entitlements, titles, privileges, etc.) and what they call machines of "dispersion," which flow "on a blind, mute, deterritorialized socius" (Deleuze and Guattari 1977, 153). They argue that this "decoded flow," like the "black box" of generative technologies, will trigger a primitive fear of incest—a fear of unfamiliar parentage that cannot be classified, organized, or understood (Deleuze and Guattari 1977, 153).

For decades, anti-technology activists have used these "primitive" anxieties around emerging technologies to marshal consensus around their curbing.[7] A recent example of how such activism is applied to generative AI shows that this fearmongering often comes from the very top of state and academic hierarchies. In an opinion column written by the late Henry Kissinger, together with experts in technology and science, the former US Secretary of State expressed apprehensions about the "cumulative ambiguities" brought about by generative artificial intelligence, suggesting that this technology might usher in a counter-Enlightenment, if not a dark age (Kissinger, Schmidt, and Huttenlocher 2023).

I argue that embracing these untraceable "monsters" of ambiguity may offer a path to overcoming limitations on human creative potential, not a backsliding into barbarism, and that we should not fear an age in which generative AI competes with our talents or challenges our ability to think and write. I base my argument, on one hand, on generative AI technology's ability to release us from coercive binaries found in the institutions regulating our knowledge (what can be called the question of "open access") and the flawed weak historical ontological position toward human creation itself. My analysis focuses specifically on the institution of "authorship" as an institution touching on both these ontological and open-access-related topics. I show that authorship serves as an ontological orientation, deriving its position on creation from theological proscriptions about the legitimacy of divine creation, and I suggest that ownership, possession, and circulation of creative works was condensed into the idea of authorial creation. My reading does not seek to uphold the *value* of GenAI creation over human creation, nor do I mean to ignore the specificity of human creativity as a means either of compensating for human deficiencies or of "overcoming" in favor of smoother, easier, and more efficient machines. Instead, I wish to show that, in a future where generative AI cannot be avoided and will increasingly be used by artists, we must support means of understanding hybrid creations in a more *creative* way, without ignoring or dismissing the relevance of specific human psycho-libidinal structures or, as one of the leading figures in the posthuman movement, Stefan Lorenz Sorgner, calls them, "psychophysiological drives" (Sorgner 2022, 48).

Through a close reading of St. Augustine's *Confessions*, a Christian humanist work, this article reveals how notions of an artwork's "legitimacy" are rooted in inherited beliefs based in paternalistic structures with normative implications (Sorgner 2013).[8] Despite the secular Renaissance and Enlightenment's challenging of this specific Christian humanist paradigm of authorship, I argue that the dualistic relations undergirding this notion persisted in institutions regulating the economic exchange of artworks. I conclude by proposing a new aesthetic paradigm for engaging with authorship in the age of AI, which opposes dualist ontologies and recommends an understanding of writing as an ambiguous practice in which the integration of emerging technologies into writing and creative practices can promote self-enhancement and experimentation with new forms.

TEXTOLATRY AND THE POSITION OF THE AUTHOR IN LITERARY STUDIES

For most of the twentieth century, the role of the author was not considered significant, as "authorship" could not be rigorously applied to the study of ideas, cultural phenomena, or the formal aspects of literary language. As a result, the recent historical study of literature could be described as a practice of "textolatry." This approach prioritizes the "centrality of text" over the "romantic centrality of the artist" (Pavel 1986, 8). One reason for this excision of the author from literary study owed to the ambiguity of fictional creations and their unintelligibility for science. In his study of the semantics of fiction, the literary critic and author Thomas Pavel surveys the impact of scientistic-based approaches on literary theory and critiques the dominance of structuralism in literary theory, which had an outsized influence on the education and training of literary scholars in the West.[9] That tradition, which rejected ambiguity in all its forms, was preceded by the analytical school of philosophy's pursuit of clarification of philosophical language, with its mission of eliminating ambiguous statements. With the emergence of structuralism, the concept of "mythocentrism," which sought universal properties of language through phonological models, privileged abstract narrative functions to the extent that they could be universalized. Both the analytical philosophical and structuralist schools were eventually supplanted by the transformational generative approach, which examined literature through a lens that enabled the study of issues such as "literary truth," the "nature of fiction," and the "resemblance between literature and reality," aspects neglected by the logical positivist and structuralist schools (Pavel 1986, 9). For this new school of literary thought, the act of human creativity needed to be understood in the vocabulary of the "imagination"—the drives and affects constituting the

specific capacity and need of the human to create—not in terms of "building blocks" that could be understood through the cipher of language.

In addition to these language-based scientific models, schools such as the Frankfurt School analyzed literature in connection with dialectical historical materialism. For these scholars, authorship was associated with bourgeois notions of "human dignity" and "freedom" that emerged in art during the nineteenth century (Adorno 2012, 98).[10] The incorporation of subjectivity or authorial voice into artwork reflected bourgeois art forms, such as the novel, and was directly tied to the emergence of a self-conscious bourgeois class that would eventually be supplanted by more revolutionary forms of social organization. This, at least, was a hope articulated by critics such as the Marxist scholar György Lukács, who saw the eventual redemption of literature in the birth of the rise of the working class. A new world, Lukacs hoped, would usher in a new literary form, the "renewed epic," to supplant flawed bourgeois forms (Lukács 1994, 152).[11] The temptation to turn this anti-author textolatry into a utopia was strong for many reasons. Structuralists such as Roland Barthes were particularly optimistic about the end of the domination of authorship on literary practice (Barthes and Heath 2009, 148).[12] Referring to the achievements of literary modernism represented by outstanding figures such as Mallarmé and Proust, Barthes aimed to show that the authorless future would be a future in which language could unfold in all its combinatory and splendid possibilities, independent of subjective human imprint.

Although this anti-author approach has remained influential and "author" is not applied rigorously as a category in the interpretation of works, the significance of "authorship" and its relevance has not gone away with the birth and development of critical literary studies. This is patently obvious in the publishing world, where books sell because of the personalities of their authors. The recent cases of Jeanine Cummins and Elena Ferrante show that the "author" has gained in importance as identity politics forces questions of "authenticity" into mainstream literary reception.[13] It is also true, however, in literary studies, where figures such as Goethe, Shakespeare, Byron, and Cervantes continue to organize the transmission of knowledge in course lectures and seminars and serve as central reference points for canonical transmission.[14]

Formalist, language-based schools were able to advocate interpretive styles that focused on language and its correspondence either to truth or to universal properties. Yet they failed to extirpate the author as a normative practice, nor did they get to the real "heart" of what the ontology of the author was. For scholars such as Barthes or Lukács, the author was a historical phenomenon to be overtaken by new—and more revolutionary—social configurations. Once the nineteenth century and its visions of Romantic genius had receded,

they believed we would be rid of the disease of bourgeois individualism that attended forms of subjective intrusion, such as strong claims on authorship. In the following close reading of Augustine's *Confessions*, I show that the specific ontology of authorship is circumscribed by a far older binary than the nineteenth century, with its roots in Christian humanism. This may go a little way toward explaining why authorship continues to organize the way that we think about the relationship between intellectual or creative property.

THE ONTOLOGY OF AUTHORSHIP AND DIVINE CREATION: ST. AUGUSTINE'S *CONFESSIONS*

The *Confessions* (397–400 AD) represent a significant contribution to the Judeo-Christian tradition for many reasons, not least for their vivid narration of Augustine's life, including the famous recounting of his vast carnal appetites as well as his reflections on Christianity, competing religions, and conversion. They also contain many insights into the significance of human creation and the connection between learning and creating. This analysis will also show how the work conceives of the relationship between creation, human autonomy, and authorship. This is explicitly thematized in the work through Augustine's insecurities surrounding his right to author the story of his life and his concern with how writing might interfere with God's jurisdiction over him and his soul.

A crucial question posed throughout the *Confessions* is whether Augustine can make a claim to author his text at all. He treats and resolves this question through a dialectical analysis—rendered poetically in the work's framing dialogue with God—on the limits placed on human creation by man's insufficient capacities on one hand and by the human tendency to go "mad" through creation that happens without authorization or consent from God on the other. In this account, all human beings must accept their position as mediators of God's sovereignty in creation. He is, furthermore, the only entity that can create perfection: "You gather all things to yourself though you suffer no need. You support, you fill, and you protect all things. You create them, nourish them, and bring them to perfection" (Augustinus 1982, 23). Humans, by contrast, can only create after seeking consent from God.

Thus, before beginning his diegetic act, Augustine must first obtain consent from God, or ask for permission to both create and authorize his writing: "Help me to find words to explain" (Augustinus 1982, 25). Augustine is careful to highlight man's relative vulnerability and insufficiency before asking for this consent, since he cannot concede a position in which humans possess any form of "creative capacity" over which God has no jurisdiction or for which God is not responsible: "My soul is like a house, small for you to enter, but I pray you

to enlarge it" (Augustinus 1982, 23). In this way, the act of authoring a text, or the act of telling the story of his life, flows from a hierarchy in which different entities have different determined capacities. God is the most gifted creator, since He is the most "gifted with speech" (Augustinus 1982, 23). Notwithstanding this relative insufficiency of man compared with this God, Augustine finds it possible to begin writing his text insofar as he accepts his position as a vessel of God, or as subordinate within the greater hierarchy of creativity.

If the human is only one of many creations of God and all capacity to create given to humans is granted by God, then it also follows that it is only through God's will that man can create. In this way, consent and authorization become connected to creative capacities. To demonstrate a capacity to create means, accordingly, to accept authorization from a higher power. Augustine renounces any claim to a human capacity in which God plays no role. He asks for God to fill him with his speech so that he can write: "Help me to find words to explain . . . My heart has ears ready to listen to you, Lord. Open them wide and whisper in my heart" (Augustinus 1982, 24–25). To ask for this consent to author his text means to appeal to God's forgiveness for man's innate weaknesses and vulnerabilities: "But dust and ashes though I am, let me appeal to your pity, since it is to you in your mercy that I speak, not to a man, who would simply laugh at me. Perhaps you too may laugh at me, but you will relent and have pity on me" (Augustinus 1982, 24–25).

Education and learning play a crucial role in Augustine's recounting of his conversion and in underlining the differences between different forms of learning and mastering toward the act of creation. The illustration of chapters from his later life, particularly the recounts of his sexual exploits, flow from his experiences as an adolescent and the knowledge and experience that he obtained under the schoolmasters (and their canes). Augustine is particularly committed to showing how schooling and education represent a form of false authority and that learning without the authority or law of God leads only to "noxious pleasures which cause us to desert [God]" (Augustinus 1982, 34). His account of how he came to learn language serves to justify this warning. For Augustine, language and learning are linked to the temptation that arises from man's desire to seek autonomy:

> All the same I was compelled to learn and good came to me as a result, although it was not of my own making. For I would not have studied at all if I had not been obliged to do so, and what a person does against his will is not to his own credit, even if what he does is good in itself. Nor was the good which came of it due to those who compelled me to study, but to you, my God. For they had not the

> insight to see that I might put the lessons which they forced me to learn to any other purpose than the satisfaction of man's insatiable desire for the poverty he calls wealth and the infamy he knows as fame. (Augustinus 1982, 32–33)

Similarly, Augustine's account defends the notion that the acquisition of reason through language is based, first and foremost, on acceptance of God's universal language. With this understanding of language, Augustine further entrenches his role as author as that of a "mediator" or "vessel" instead of a "creator." Augustine defends this position by explaining that the learning of language does not happen through communication of symbols or words, or learning within the family or at school, but rather through grasping the full spectrum of language's natural characteristics, which make up God-given creation:

> I can remember that time, and later on I realized how I had learnt to speak. It was not my elders who showed me the words by some set system of instruction, in the way that they taught me to read not long afterwards; but, instead, I taught myself by using the intelligence which you, my God, gave to me. . . . for there is a kind of universal language, consisting of expressions of the face and eyes, gestures and tones of voice, which can show whether a person means to ask for something and get it, or refuse it and having nothing to do with it. (Augustinus 1982, 29)

This allows Augustine to make a hierarchical distinction between what might be defined as a quasi-phonetic or naturalistic conception of language and a morphemic one. The second defines language as the acquisition of the word and is linked to rationality, while the first is based in the divine gift of God's creation (in the phenomena making up the natural features of speech). In Augustine's account, morphemic systems are secondary to naturalistic and phonetic ones. By extension, rationality, as secondary in the process of language acquisition, is also God-given. Indeed, rationality as a God-given gift has long been adduced as evidence and justification for human-centered ontologies in which God gives authorization to man to master and tamper with the world. This further supports laws in which the acquisition of God-granted rationality regulates the adjudication of rights.[15]

Having language as a God-given gift and learning to speak words or write are, by extension, not synonymous processes. The applies also to the distinction conventionally made between speaking and writing, which was a strong motif in ancient philosophy, as in Plato's dialogues in the *Phaedrus*. For ancient philosophers, writing was a form of technological (or Promethean) enhancement.

For Augustine, the "human-centered" aspect occurs in the learning of words. Acquisition of language consists in two steps—first learning through one's own inherent ability to interpret God's sounds as universal language and then learning to produce words—and thus writing is a further extension of a logos-based language taught primarily by teachers in schools. To the extent that logos is not understood as a secondary, but as a primary process that reflects man's inherent and autonomous capacities, it represents a significant threat to God's creation and endangers a proper understanding of the human as a "vessel" or weaker actor in the hierarchy of creation.

Writing or creating represents a dangerous potential to bypass God's authorizing consent and go mad. "Madness" here must be understood not only as a form of delusions of grandeur, but also as a way of distinguishing between "real" and "false" knowledge in writing without the consent or authorization of God. Augustine refuses to endorse a comparison between human and divine creation, but rather accepts a hierarchy where "rationality" derives from logos-based speech and should properly lead to a closer connection with God, or to the virtue of accepting His word. Augustine describes what he means by "madness" and epitomizes the misguided ancient notion of creativity that compares the human with the divine in his recounting of reading the Homeric epics and Virgil's *Aeneid* as an adolescent. Both, to him, were pleasurable to read and represented diversions from "valuable studies" that taught him to read and write through rote memorization. Yet they both are described as mere "fancies dreamed up by poets" and "empty romances" without the authorization of God. Thus, even though "the burning of Troy and . . . the ghost of Creusa" were "enchanting dreams," they were inferior to the "loathsome jingles" learned in school to master timetables or arithmetic (Augustinus 1982, 34–35). Learning for the sake of being a vessel or a tool has as its goal the promulgation of God's will and can thus be said to be within the boundaries of man's authority to create. This learning is based in "practicality" that gives the power to "read whatever is set before me and write whatever I wish to write" (Augustinus 1982, 35). However, romances with the goal of upholding man's ability to create without any due recognition of God or without the authorization of divine consent are mere fantasies, representing delusions and falsehood.

Even where Augustine concedes that the capacity that brings about such dreams and empty romances can be described as the product of human creativity or invention, he takes pains to clarify that such acts are done with ulterior motives. In the example of Homer and the human weaknesses attributed to the Greek gods, Augustine points out that Homer may have invented these tales and stories but would have only done so to justify human sinfulness. Thus, the Homeric works—which endorse criminal acts—lose their authority

as texts, as they cannot be the basis of any normative law or have a claim as to authority as a text.

The final step that is important in Augustine's hierarchy of distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate forms of creation is the relationship between creation and procreation. To further highlight the sinfulness of creation without God's consent, Augustine makes an astonishing comparison between schools and brothels, thereby further entrenching the notion of "legitimate" and "illegitimate" forms of creating through comparison to sexual acts occurring inside marriage and the procreative begetting done merely for the sake of pleasure: "It is true that curtains are hung over the entrances to the schools where literature is taught, but they are not so much symbols in honor of mystery as veils concealing error" (Augustinus 1982, 34). The meaning of these veils becomes clear through the following statement: "The words are certainly not learnt any the more easily by reason of the filthy moral, but filth is committed with greater confidence as a result of learning the words"(Augustinus 1982, 37). The teachers, themselves, were misguided in their learning, for though the "words," that is, "reason" and "human autonomy," were not in and of themselves filthy, it was the ends to which they were put into service that deluded and corrupted Augustine in his youth.

These reflections on authorship make it possible to consider writing in relation to what one might call a *weak* ontology of authorship. This weak ontology presupposes not only a single creator, but also a legitimizing structure built on dualist foundations with the goal of obtaining higher consent. Authorship and writing practices have, for a very long time, related to normativity deriving from divine consent and established by the legitimizing example of a "perfect creator." In effect, Augustine delegates to the writer the task of the "work" of writing, while reserving the cream of that creation for another—a position on creation that runs exactly against the "Romantic genius" endorsed by the structuralists in their criticism of authorship.

Augustine's work suggests that a weak ontology of authorship is tied up with what it means to create *as an imperfect being* in relation to a *perfect one*. According to this model, to be human is to accept that human creation is subordinate to other greater beings. The material proof of this ontology is copyright, which has been given different names throughout the history of print but was once significantly called a "grace" bestowed on a lesser creator by a higher executive power. The printing of the book then is the concession of "privileges" to an author, enacted by a higher authority.[16] This weak view of authorship, which runs counter to the atheistic Renaissance or Romantic view of authorship that saw creation as a means of self-liberation from dogma—Goethe's Faust is tragically unable to do this, but Shelley's Prometheus succeeds—saw human

creative propensities as a weakness in and of themselves, not a strength. It is important to note this distinction, given the bias of literary criticism toward the Romantic model of authorship, as described in the next section.

NON-DUALISM, AI, AND AUTHORSHIP: TOWARD A STRONG ACCOUNT OF WRITING AND AUTHORSHIP

"Ambiguous," from "*ambi*" (both) and "*agere*" (to steer), means to "steer both ways": not to decide on one path or lay claim to one truth, but to remain open to many possible futures of creating and being. Embracing an ontology of becoming means embracing ambiguous forms—Haraway's cyborgs, the monsters and hybrids of posthuman artworks—or remaining open to the possibilities of writing futures (Haraway 1991). An ontology of becoming rejects the notion that there is "one truth" in the non-empirical world, and instead takes seriously ambiguous and evolving forms of life, including the emergence and development of new technologies. Although the evolution of literary theory shows that there is no "truth" in fiction or writing, only correspondences, semantics, and generative possibilities, the search for unambiguous language and truth was, as described in the second section of this article, the grounds for exorcising the author—as a subjective and statistically unrepresentable "free radical"—from formal literary criticism.

Studies on the mainstream chatbot ChatGPT so far have concluded that its abilities are limited in comparison to human writing—that its rule-based thinking curtails its ability to be inventive in terms of style, and that its propensity to take on "impersonal it positions" and not "I-positions" marks it as substantially different from the idiosyncrasies of personalized human writing (Matusov et al. 2023). Several experimental studies with chatbots that have designed tasks for Bing or ChatGPT, such as the "grandomastry" activities based in random educational design, conclude that AI is proficient at "storytelling," noting an ability to tell stories that are "captivating" (Popov Alexander 2023). This viewpoint is marginal and the number of these empirical studies is limited, but there is a strong consensus on chatbot and generative AI use and its instrumental value, that is, its capacity to assist in writing, perform editing tasks, assist with organization, and proofread (Altmäe, Sola-Leyva, and Salumets 2023).

ChatGPT's capacity to generate human-like text has also been significantly noted, including by Kissinger et al. By this they refer to the chatbot's ability to "produce unique responses," that is, select information from a human-generated data set on the basis of probabilistic thinking, which constitutes a unique response in accordance with the principles of deeper syntactic structures (Chomsky 2002).

However, what has also emerged as a consensus point is that the development of AI generative technologies may yet surprise us, as the mind and engine of these machines "lie under the hood," with even their inventors unable to predict their future capacities. Given that there are many critics of the "black box" theory of ChatGPT, we need not make any predictions about the immediate future of such technologies, but may rather accept their existence and accept that they will be integrated into future artworks. Large language models, such as ChatGPT, have pushed the needle on public opinion about what it means to work and live with generative AI, with many Americans now agreeing that AI can be classified as sentient. There is a direct correlation between this perception and support for blanket bans on its use (Pauketat, Ladak, and Anthis 2023). In terms of this article, this would suggest that as the perception of AI's ability to author and produce original and authentic works increases (a strong ontology of authorship), it becomes more threatening (a weak ontology of authorship).

My argument emphasizes that as AI becomes mores sentient or more recognized as such, the threat of its ability to "author" original texts in the strong sense of creation becomes more of a possibility. The "weak" ontological position of authorship supported by the Christian humanist tradition and modeled by Augustine shows what is at stake here. The machine's ability to generate and author cannot be contained, sourced, understood, or regulated. For this reason, there is a correlation between the increasing perception of its sentience and the urge to ban its use.

For a perspective that embraces the ambiguities of an ontology of becoming, such outright bans are implausible and a weak ontology of authorship is impractical in an age of information flow and new restructuring of the archeology of human sciences (Foucault 1989). What must, instead, be stressed is the way in which such technologies can be used both instrumentally and perhaps (eventually) creatively. For college students writing term papers and seminar papers and confronted with the task of thinking as it evolves via writing, the use of ChatGPT must not be "banned," but should rather be moderated and guided. In educational contexts, for example, it is possible to admit certain uses of generative technologies to teach students about their use and engage with their own writing styles more reflectively. Most intentional pedagogies stress this approach to writing, accepting that these technologies not only not will go away, but will continue to develop in unexpected ways (Ng et al. 2022).

Although it seems remote, if, in the future, AI generative tools can write an original and inventive work such as *In Search of Lost Time*, then the authorship of such a work ought to be celebrated, just as the authorship of Marcel Proust's

work is recognized as an achievement. Such works may also take the shape of hybrid realizations. Once paternalistic structures of legitimizing consent are denied, there seems to be no plausibly good reason to deny a future in which such cultural products could be realized, whether by carbon-based lifeforms or neural networks. Future uses of AI in writing, as the technology develops, must not prohibit nor deny the possibility of co-authorship, when possible. Through AI, we can learn also what it means to have a strong account of authorship, that is, to embrace the ambiguity of language and the subjectivity of writing by new forms of cognition, where we may not be able to understand or cannot predict how it will create. What is required here is not a forensic analysis of what is or is not human, but rather that we ask the right questions: For what and for whom do we create and why? If large language models are part of our lifeworld, they will be part of that equation.

CONCLUSIONS

Studies of large language models such as Chat GPT and generative AI have focused on the ability of AI to create texts that are "humanlike" and have thus considered the problem of sentience in relation to the powers of creativity. This article examines this problem as both a historical and a philosophical problem. To answer the philosophical problem of AI bans fully and consider it critically, we need to find many rich examples of what it means to author a text and to consider different ontologies of authorship. Such examples touch on interrelated topics discussed briefly in this article, such as the relationship between truth, fiction, and subjective human imprints on writing and the historical question of open access, or the way in which knowledge is circulated within the archeology of the human sciences (Foucault 1989).

This article analyzes a specific "weak" ontology of authorship to assess the constraints that limit human creativity outside of the powers of human cognition and capacity for artistic representation. St. Augustine's moving—and, for us, remote—autobiographical narrative discourse may not seem like a natural interlocutor for chatbots, but this article has shown that its reflections on the meaning of creation warn us about the dangers of imposing metaphysical barriers on creation. Augustine's writing was a philosophical acceptance of subjugating creativity to an otherworldly, better, truer form of divine creation. That metaphysical position was part of a discursive logic that was historically inscribed into institutions of copyright that control, regulate, source, and authenticate human creativity and discourse. Thus, his perspective clarifies how bans on creativity might reinforce a dualistic ontology that is becoming even more implausible

with the evolution of new technological forms that are introducing new forms of cognition and new approaches to creativity into our lifeworld.

One valid concern and objection that may be raised here is that by admitting the use of generative technologies into artistic and daily practic—or even celebrating it—we fetishize the technological object and make a "godhead" out of chatbots such as ChatGPT, thus failing to overcome the foundational dualist distinction underlying our culture. ChatGPT, in this equation, becomes Augustine's God. Given the absorption of technological objects into a political capitalist system based on exploitation of surplus labor and resting on juridical traditions steeped in Christian humanist dualities, this may even seem highly likely. Moreover, without overcoming the dualist distinctions internalized within the human psychic structure, we will not be able to overcome symptoms of the "Promethean shame" discussed by the German philosopher Günther Anders, whereby the human becomes dependent on the technological object (Anders 2002). Yet this makes reflecting on such generative technologies even more important, as it will become increasingly necessary to consider how our political, social, and aesthetic orientation to technologies can become liberatory instead of placatory.

Technologies are widely used to promote self-enhancement and development. AI technologies such as AI-powered reference managers or generative AI are used to promote accuracy and efficiency, a reason that they will not become obsolete, but will become more developed as the data on which they are trained multiply. This is not a value judgment; there is simply a high likelihood that this will occur, considering the way in which technologies are being integrated into our lifeworld. Given the inevitability of further developments and the skill of AI tools in mastering storytelling and narrative already, it is not implausible to suppose that AI generative tools will eventually be able to write passable fiction or experimental texts. An ontology of becoming and an approach that embraces new ambiguous forms affirm such developments, without leaving behind the creativity of human beings. It is not the "overcoming" (*Überwindung*) but the "twisting" (*Verwindung*) of our weak ontology toward creativity with emerging technologies to create a "strong account" of authorship that may be the future of writing (Sorgner 2023).

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NOTES

1. As Sorgner explains in this monograph on the philosophy of posthuman art and in other monographs and interviews, "posthumanism" has its own schismatic tendencies and cannot be referred to as a single philosophical movement with affiliated goals. It encompasses submovements such as the trans-, post-, and metahumanist movements, which have unique philosophical backgrounds and agendas. However, the break with ontological dualism is a common factor shared between all submovements.
2. Postmodernists consider postmodern art also a project of reflection, emphasizing postmodern art's ability to become philosophical (Bennington 1985).
3. One very recent example of this is represented by the Open Access Movement and the "Guerilla Open Access Manifesto," which argues that scholars with access to information have a moral duty to share this information with the rest of the world through sabotage and disruptive resistance including, for example, sharing passwords.
4. What Foucault describes as the "*ordre*" (order) underlying all scientific theories as well as philosophical explanations.
5. "Musik machen ist auch noch eine Art Kindermachen."
6. It is, of course, possible to point to AI deficiencies such asthe self-driving car's failures or the failure of the AI chess player to "understand what the game means to those who play it" to point to the fundamental difference between human and machine endeavors. In terms of creative output, efficiency, and accuracy, AI generative outputs are already extremely impressive and their capacity to become more "sentient" or "self-aware" is not even disputed by technoskeptics (Osborne and Rose 2023).
7. Often these "bioluddites" defend terms such as "natural law" to uphold their view that only "human-genomes" have rights (Hughes 2004, 75).
8. Sorgner differentiates between paternalistic and nihilistic cultures by arguing that paternalistic cultures are those that pretend to understand what is universally good or right, whereas nihilistic cultures are those that teach us to move beyond such structures (Sorgner 2013). The pervasive idea of "universality" occurs then in "encrusted" structures existing in institutions that include the Church, laws regulating reproduction and human fertility, and sexuality (Sorgner 2022).
9. While it is true that structuralism no longer dominates the human sciences, structuralist approaches have remained incredibly influential and the movement's proponents are some of the most revered in literary studies, and include Julia Kristeva, Jonathan Culler, and Franco Moretti.
10. Adorno cites Kant, Schiller, and Hegel as having displaced the idea of the "Naturschöne," that which is naturally beautiful, with concepts linked to the autonomous subject, such as "freedom" and "human dignity," implying that "all that owed in the world is achieved by the autonomous subject."
11. "The novel is the form of the epoch of absolute sinfulness, as Fichte said, and it must remain the dominant form so long as the world is ruled by the same stars. In Tolstoy, intimations of a breakthrough into a new epoch are visible; but they remain polemical, nostalgic and abstract" (Lukács 1994, 152).
12. This is why Barthes' essay ends with an appeal to the critic to embrace and celebrate the death of authorship: "Classical criticism has never paid any attention to the reader; for it, the writer is the only person in literature. We are now beginning to let ourselves be fooled no longer by the arrogant antiphrastical recriminations of good society in favour of the thing it sets

aside, ignores, smothers, or destroys; we know that to give writing its future, it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author" (Barthes and Heath 2009, 148).

13. These are just two of the most public scandals to rock the publishing world. Jeanine Cummins's book "American Dirt" was the subject of controversy for her supposed lack of "authentic" Mexican identity. The revelation of the identity of Elena Ferrante, whose pseudonym was penetrated by an Italian journalist via financial documents, represents another example of the mainstream's fixation on the author.
14. In literary studies, it is still common to be identified as a scholar of an author, for example, "Goethe scholar" or "Shakespeare scholar."
15. An example of this might be found in the *Apostolicae Sedis*, a bull issued by Pope Pius IX in 1869, which lays out the present sanctions of the Catholic Church and is based on an account of how the rational soul becomes connected to the body at the point of fertilization. Such a view, which has had enormous consequences for all ethical matters, not least abortion, also has important implications for what it means to be able to speak and write or be an author.
16. As the literary historian Robert Darnton (2021) documents meticulously in his study of book printing in the French Enlightenment, these emerged in the form of "privileges" and "special permits" given by the sovereign—usually a nation's king but later other (bureaucratic and state) forms of authority—that permitted a book's printing. Those privileges were the only means by which an author could obtain rights to his or her work. Built, therefore, into every copyright law is a metaphorical dispossession of the person's creation of their own work. Overall, the balance has tipped historically to the higher power that permits circulation of that work more than to the "technical creator."

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