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## CLCWeb Call for Papers: AI and/as Form

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## **CLCWeb Call for Papers: AI and/as Form**

We are now several years into the growing interest in “generative AI” that followed the introduction of transformer-based Large Language Models (LLMs) and text-to-image generators (Stable Diffusion, DALL-E), and more than a year from the explosive public release of ChatGPT on November 30, 2022. This special issue of CLCWeb is about how theorists and analysts of culture are approaching formal questions in the context of technologies of machine learning and generative AI, and, also, conversely, about how to theorize AI’s forms.

We seek contributions to these debates that address the question of AI and/as *form*, with the term “form” encompassing, but not limited to, notions of: style, genre, medium, generated writing and visual “art,” forms of digital labor, material conditions of possibility, digitally enclosed linguistic and artistic commons, and the statistical and textual formalisms that are functionalized in the production of “content.”

Recent issues and forums of journals like *New Literary History*, *American Studies*, and *Critical Inquiry*, among others, as well as several conferences in the field, have addressed AI and its critical contexts. This special issue of *CLCWeb* is aiming to build on some of those conversations through a direct engagement with matters pertaining to AI and form across the arts and humanities, seeking to investigate the ways that scholars are both engaging with and critiquing the mechanical production of art and language now — especially (though not necessarily exclusively) across plural and comparative cultural contexts.

Contributions are invited from scholars working in fields including literature, music, media studies, and the visual arts; comparative theory, critical AI studies, digital humanities, comparative literary studies, digital arts, and the information sciences and arts — all broadly construed; as well as adjacent and allied fields.

Abstracts could address the questions below and other issues:

- How to understand the form and affordances of AI? What does AI enable, how does it constrain, and what does it preclude?
- What are the key metaphors we need to think with or against generative AI? What kinds of cultural production and contestation do these tools enable or foreclose?
- How does AI interact with work on style, tone, genres, and aesthetics in the literary and visual arts? Which traditional habits of thinking about form does AI interrogate? And what new categories for describing form might AI

facilitate?

- How might formalist readings resist the immediacy of “generated” artistic and literary thinking?
- How do literary and political formalisms relate to those digital formalisms that best describe AI?
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- What happens to the epistemological and ontological status of the work of art, as the modes of mechanical reproduction extend to generative and remixed forms?
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- What kinds of cultural production and contestation does the use of AI enable or preclude? How do they intersect with (post)humanist and (post)structuralist theories of language, mind, agency, and embodiment?
- How does the context of AI help scholars of literature and culture clarify or deconstruct binaries such as truth/falsity, mediation/immediacy, good-faith/bad-faith, explainable/black-boxed and authenticity/fakery?
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- How, in the AI era, may scholars of form take up questions of pattern, structure, and repetition in visual, textual or sonic arts?
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- What are the contours of emerging areas of AI aesthetics? What are the possible tactical/strategic uses of AI aesthetics, especially in the case of today’s generative AI?
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- How should critics of genre, power, coloniality and gender address the era of AI? What are key informing discourses, epistemic frames and ideologies that AI makes (in)visible?
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- In what extractive contexts and ecologies, and out of which labor régimes or industries, does AI emerge? What new forms of creative extraction does it enable?
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- How might the *form of writing* change after generative AI? What new or traditional forms of *scholarship* (papers and books, multimodal transformations, machinic “translations”) are enabled or precluded by generative AI?
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- What new forms of regulation, restriction, reuse and remixing does generative AI call for? How does it intersect with the forms and categories that constitute neoliberal capitalism? What new enclosures does it represent, and what kinds

- of commoning practices concerning the linguistic commons and otherwise, should be developed in response?
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- How do comparative cultural contexts (across differences in language, power, access to technology, the degree of industrialization or post-industrialization of societies) problematize theories of AI and/as form?
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- How does aesthetic, material, and theoretic form illuminate the ongoing generative AI revolution?
- How do we understand the ideological and material consequences of the autonomization of language? What models for investigating language are enable or disabled by generative AI?
- We invite original contributions in response to this theme with abstracts of 250 words, a 100 word bio note, and 5 keywords due by April 1st, 2024.

Authors with selected abstracts will be notified by May 1st, 2024, and invited to submit full manuscripts of approximately 5000-10,000 words, critical reviews of 3000 words, or book reviews of 1000 words, for consideration for inclusion in the special issue due by October 1st, 2024, with an expected publication date around March 2025.

For more information, inquiries, or to submit an abstract for our consideration and review, please contact the two editors of this special issue, Sayan Bhattacharyya and Gabriel Hankins, by email at [bhattach@umich.edu](mailto:bhattach@umich.edu) and [ghankin@clermson.edu](mailto:ghankin@clermson.edu) respectively. Please use the subject heading "CLCweb Special Issue on AI and Form" in any electronic communication or submission.