



Original article

## Challenges of Contemporary English Literature in the Age of the Artificial Intelligence Revolution

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### ABSTRACT

This research will explore how contemporary literature in English has dealt with the spectre of artificial intelligence and the entry of AI into our lives by wrestling with the complicated issues of authorship, creativity, identity and narrative form that the advent of AI has engendered. This does not treat AI like any other tech phenomenon beast, but a social/cultural phenomenon that in its turn interrupts and disrupts literary production and critical reading alike. The section to follow then links posthuman identity and Digital mediation and surveillance, especially as they relate to AI-based systems of address and the ethical contradictions they enable, to the book's primary case study Blackfish City (2018), by Sam J. Miller. The project based, in theory, on posthumanist theory, digital humanities, and cultural criticism contends that contemporary literature does not merely mirror technological change, but rather, that it wrestles with the social consequences of technological change on the one hand or human agency or social justice on the other. It concludes that artificial intelligence does not obliterate human imagination but instead transforms it into a new realm of interaction with machine creativity.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Blackfish City, Posthumanism, Digital Culture, Authorship, Identity

## تحديات الأدب الإنكليزي المعاصر في ضوء ثورة الذكاء الاصطناعي

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### المستخلص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في القوة التحويلية للذكاء الاصطناعي في أدب القرن الحادي والعشرين، مع التركيز على قدرته في إعادة تشكيل مفاهيم التأليف والإبداع والهوية. وتتناول الكيفية التي يعيد بها الذكاء الاصطناعي تشكيل الأنماط السردية، ويُبكِّد الحدود الفاصلة بين الإبداع الإنساني والآلي، ويعيد إنتاج العملية الأدبية. وبالتحديد على رواية "مدينة السمك الأسود" (Blackfish City) لسام ج. ميلر كنموذج تطبيقي، تستكشف الدراسة تمثيلات المفاهيم ما بعد الإنسانية في الأدب، حيث تُفهم الهوية على أنها هجينة ووسيطها التكنولوجيا. كما تسلط الضوء على المعضلات الأخلاقية والاجتماعية الناجمة عن التقدم التكنولوجي، والتي تجسدها الرواية في رؤيتها الديناميكية للذكاء الاصطناعي بوصفه قوة تحررية وقمعية في آن واحد. وتجادل الدراسة بأن الأدوات الرقمية، والكتابة المعتمدة على الذكاء الاصطناعي، والسرد الافتراضي تُحدث اضطراباً في الممارسات القرائية التقليدية، كما تهزُّ هيمنة المؤلف التقليدي. ومن خلال الجمع بين النظرية ما بعد الإنسانية، والإنسانيات الرقمية، والنقد الثقافي، تؤكد الدراسة أن الأدب ما زال يشكل ساحة متميزة تُطرح فيها الأسئلة الجوهرية حول القيم الإنسانية في ظل بزوغ التقنيات الجديدة. وفي الختام، تؤكد أن الذكاء الاصطناعي لا يلغي الإبداع الإنساني، بل يُعيد تعريفه بوصفه تعاوناً بين الإنسان والآلة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الذكاء الاصطناعي، مدينة السمك الأسود، ما بعد الإنسانية، الثقافة الرقمية، التأليف، الهوية

### 1. Introduction

AI is one of the most powerful forces transforming our culture today, and literature has been profoundly affected by this. No longer relegated to the background as cyborg text or distant, anthropomorphic ornament to twenty-first-century fiction, AI has moved into the foreground, and is inseparable from the ways in which narratives vitally configure agency, creativity, embodiment and power. N. Katherine Hayles points out that, in addition to changing the logic by which assembled data is recognized as actable unit, digital technologies change both the material conditions and the conceptual radii of the read/write process in which the human is encased. It is here, then, that the value of contemporary English literature becomes apparent, in providing an important site for thinking through how the human has shifted in its relation to the intelligent machine (Hayles, 2012). In this study, we explore these questions through Sam J. Miller's *Blackfish City* (2018), a narrative of a future Arctic city of climate crisis, extreme wealth and income inequality, and ubiquitous technological mediation. The novel is particularly well-suited to this question because it depicts AI not just as a tool but as a social and political actor in everyday life, politics, and identity. The paper claims that *Blackfish City* reshapes traditional notions of authorship, subjectivity and narrative voice, in light of new challenges presented by the AI revolution to which contemporary English literature is now falling prey. In its approach, the work combines close reading and aspects of posthumanist and cultural analysis, demonstrating the connection between literary form and thematic content in the imaginations of technological transformation (Abd Ali, 2025).

## **2. The Emergence of AI in Writing**

Writing, production, and distribution have all evolved by now; AI will drive the evolution even further. The author act has shifted so that grammar aids and predictive text systems, not to mention generative language models like GPT, are more involved than part of the writing composition, allowing new writing avenues for authors to compose, revise and experiment with tone and structure. While these tools do a great job of better structuring the content and doing so in a more readable way, the very use of them pose fundamental questions about authorship, reliance, and the human pencil. At this point, the question is not, can an AI write (yes), but how will this change writing (Grammarly, 2023).

It represents a fundamental change in our thinking about literature, as creativity has been presumed to be a uniquely human trait. These pixelated aides generate circling lines that recycle the sound of actual language, imitating identifiable others expertly while providing composition advice, all while lacking the human traits of lived experience, ethical being and precincts of time. That is why writing with AI has to be seen in the phases of literary practice and not as the end of the writer. Literary meaning is autonomous of grammatical correctness because it is based on affect, cultural memory, and interpretative intent of the human author (Broussard, 2018).

So likewise the entrance of the A.I. writing into the writing craft, adds compelling tensions to the writing craft of the twenty first century. AI both expands figurative possibilities of the caption-assist voice as well as limiting by relying on the literal to flatten, homogenize where figurative voice is contained in a brief, and so muted as a gain and loss of voice. This tension constitutes a component of a more general literary question conceptualized below in this paper: how can literature retain its critical and, at its best, even imaginative force in a world more and more dominated by algorithmic production (Williams, 2021).

## **3. The Impact of Technology on Literary Forms**

Technology has actually changed literary form itself. Digital media have transformed the speed, scale, and fashions of text production and consumption, making possible shorter formats, multi-modality, and novel relationships among writers and readers. And the accessibility of social media, blogs, and electronic publishing has allowed for increase democratization of literary production and left behind many family members who may have been ignored by traditional print bodies. Meanwhile, as these changes have occurred, they have changed what readers have expected, frequently at the expense of delayed engagement with long-form texts, favoring largely immediate, piecemeal entry and more visual engagement (Friedman, 2018).

The most important consequences of these formal changes for twenty first century English literature is that they not only change how texts circulate, but how narrative itself is conceptualized. Interactive fiction and digital storytelling, not to mention transmedia narratives, demonstrate that participation, hyperlinking, visual layering, and platform-based reception are now aesthetic features of literary experience. But the migration from page to screen comes with its own anxieties, as we all know: less attention, less depth of understanding, less depth of interpretation. Thus literature today lives inside the truth of both the new catalog of expressive options opening up through digital media and the truth of the cultural conditions rendered by a world that is technologically accelerated (Baron, 2015).

#### **4. The Role of Technology in Literary Censorship**

Internet technology has made the literary censorship a lot more confused. With literature circulating now in electronic archives and databases, and algorithmically mediated spaces, the regulation of visibility has itself dispersed, and become less transparent. In addition to being even more accessible, text can be controlled by governments, corporations and platform managers—blocking access to certain works, banning allegedly extremist ideas or regulating circulation through content moderation regimes. Censorship here is no longer just about not allowing printed books, but also works through rankings, through filter bays that are automated, and on the platform level the control of access to information (Williams, 2021).

But simultaneously, digital technology can afford writers an arsenal for resisting. We have publishing that is decentralised, archiving that is online, and networks that are non-gatekept through which to save and share our written words. This ambiguity is key; the very technological context that enables erasure and visibility, may just as well enable transmission, archival and counter publicity. So the problem for literature is less whether technology erases than how technology reinscribes power relations which are inscribed in digital systems (Zhao 2018).

Blackfish City is also partly about that broader background, with technological infrastructure shot through much of the conversation about greed, access, and class. Thus, the novel self-reflexively emphasizes the likeness of the politics of digital mediation and literary representation, given that the battle for information is a battle for voice and participatory agency and auto/biographical right to narrate lived reality. That is why censorship in the age of the internet must be regarded both as a political issue and as a literary problem (Miller, 2018).

#### **5. AI and Literature**

Unlike other elements of today, AI stands alone as both a form of physical world, persistent property and as a most szeitimenting cultural symbol. AI tools shape how we generate texts today; literary representations of AI speculate on larger issues of consciousness, agency, and Human-ness tomorrow. AI distilled automation and loss of agency fears in non-fiction, and the dissolution of human vs. As a consequence, literary works that engage with AI are rarely about its technical feasibility and often become power-, embodiment- and ethical meditations (Broussard, 2018).

And this is precisely what occurs in Blackfish City. In his not too distant urban future, Miller imagines a world in which systems of technology now drive everyday life, shaping how we interact with one another and where we go, amid dramatic inequalities that are already severe. Not just a helper to humans, the AI here is also how the political and moral order of the city is created and maintained. By putting this relationship of entanglement so front and center in the novel, it opens the door for the reader to suspect or rethink the relationship between advancements in technology and notions of freedom, privacy, and personhood in digitally mediated environments (Hayles, 2012).

With AI understood as something that exposes, if only as a challenge, the rigid lines between subject and system and human agency and technological governance. This sense of representation in Miller feeds posthumanist controversy over technology expressing agency and life and passing a chain reaction back to our lives and the way intelligible systems are neither as straightforward as a weed in a garden of human life on the outside but rather vehicled really intermingled in a complex of expressing identity, memoria, and belonging. In this sense, the novel is a singularly appropriate form

in which to think through an engagement with how the irritation of the AI revolution resonates or registers in contemporary English Literature (Braidotti, 2013).

### **6. Posthumanism and Identity: Who Are We in a World of AI?**

The number-one thing *Blackfish City* accomplishes, however, is in thinking through identity in the posthuman. The subjects created by the novel live intertwined lives with biotechnology, networks, and digitally mediated environments which flip on their head the humanist assumption of the independence and biological sacredness of identity. Identity, in posthumanist terms, emerges rather as an interplay among various actors, and is hybrid, entangled with other human and non-human bodies, and affectively reconfigured through the activity of technological systems. This vision would be similar to Braidotti's account of the posthuman subject as a patchwork fabric as opposed to a fully contained self (Braidotti, 2013).

The characters of Miller frequently grapple with problems of embodiment, continuity, and authenticity. Their experiences indicate that selfhood is no longer based in the body but rather mediated through data, memory, surveillance & institutional control. These moments are important because they ground abstract theoretical worries in a lived narrative experience. Instead of basic loss of humanity, posthuman identity in the novel provides ways in which technology mediates our lives and generate new ways of being connected but at the same time it creates vulnerability, fragmentation and imbalance of power (Hayles, 2012).

As a result, AI becomes much more than a mere background device to be integrated into the narrative. As an ordering principle in social and political life, it is implicated in processes of social and political surveillance, organization of communities, and forms of control. In *Blackfish City*, identity is thus intertwined with power: who can be seen, who can be read by the system, who cannot be counted. The novel demonstrates that this condition of the posthuman identity is not only a philosophical category, but it entails an ethical and a political implication through that frame (Bennett, 2010).

*Blackfish City* engages in a broader twenty-first-century reframing of subjectivity by questioning dualisms like human/machine, body/data, and autonomy/control. What makes this book literary, is that these thoughts are not merely abstract theory, but are dramatized through narrative voice, world-building, and the character's difficulties. In this manner, the narrative demonstrates how modern literature has the ability to convey the philosophical consequences of AI in a manner that does justice to the intelligibility and affective impact of the argument (Braidotti, 2013).

### **7. Implications for Literature and Society**

The implications of this analysis extend further than just one novel. This essay will argue that contemporary English-language literatures and genre writing in the age of AI-coolest capitalism play a crucial role in shaping the what techno-munseras they will co-design social imaginaries; that is, collective imaginations of what techno-munseras they will create. Miller's literary offerings are a rebuttal to the genre which celebrates innovation without critique; the texts show us that rather than an innovation, AI is precisely bound up with inequality, surveillance, ecological crisis, and fights over justice (Gibbons, 2018).

Then there is the novel's formal criticism, as well. Similarly the novel's distributed social habitat and multi-imperative is redolent of the networked nature of our digital apparatus. Form and theme

therefore mutually reinforce each other, the novel's architecture a reflection of the dispersed, diffuse, and mediated state it seeks to depict. Whatever structural features, themes or notions arise from generative AI narratives, they must, at literature's heart, center the human experience of the text and the problem is not in what the novel tells us of technology but a Technological Modernity "makes formal" of the novel's ways of thinking on technology (Gitelman, 2006).

Blackfish City tests the limits of this interpretation of art, demonstrating that literature remains one of our richest means of confronting how we are reshaping our lives through technology. This can transform abstract debates about data, automation and machine intelligence into the concrete experience of fear, hope, exclusion and resistance. It can maintain ambiguity and instrumentalism by equalizing the idea that the digital tools could signal liberation in one case while signaling domination in another (Abd Ali, 2025).

These policies are a product of institutions, of economic incentives and, even more important, of political agendas all human constructs. It says, however, that we can always contest the myth of technological futures by reminding everyone that the power of technology is always in the hands of people people who say no to oppressive social structures. Relevant to society because it puts the discussion back on the road of responsibility and the ethical design of technology (Abd Ali, 2025).

Thus, the most import challenge of contemporary literature is not an aesthetic treatment of AI as novelty however a critical arduous have interaction with the values inscribed in the media of practice. Tertiary texts examine the common use of the intelligent systems in its ability to look after the human, restoring human dignity or embedding social inequity or rewriting the terms of our common existence. In doing so 21, it preserves critical distance from a celebratory account of innovation, and re-establishes a central place for the technological imaginary and social ethics of technology-centered societies (Berry, 2014).

## 8. Conclusion

Even as some level of apprehension lingers concerning the role of AI and ML into the human life, modern English literature has risen a defining domain for investigating the palpable cultural, moral, and creative consequences of AI. The tools of writing have always been changing, but AI claims that so too have the forms, themes and critical horizons of literary production. Through its posthuman subject, the surveillance society it weaves around its characters, and its exploration of what human social interaction looks like in a world technologically mediated until the apocalypse, Blackfish City offers one particular example of fiction responding to reimagine through critical lenses the realities and ideals of the digital turn.

The novel shows through that which an essay cannot convey that AI needs not only to be considered a technological novelty but an embodiment of new modes of being human, new modes of political relation, new modes of literary imagination. Rather than obliterating the human, the AI revolution is asking literature to reexamine the very notion of being human. This is why contemporary fiction is needed in para-state technology debates contemporary fiction does not only document change, it interprets, interrogates and embodies change. It therefore suggests that there remains one unique space of reflection on the promises and threats of artificial intelligence, and that space has yet to be filled with literature.

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