



Between Duty, Responsibility, and the Desire to Write in the Twenty-First Century. Challenges for the Humanities and Social Sciences in the New Circuits of Knowledge

Entre el deber, la responsabilidad y el deseo de escribir en el siglo XXI. Desafíos de las Humanidades y las Ciencias Sociales en los nuevos circuitos del conocimiento

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Abstract: This article explores the act of writing in the twenty-first century as a subjective, political, and philosophically situated practice, threatened and reconfigured by the emergence of generative artificial intelligence. Drawing on coordinates that bring together Lacanian psychoanalysis, continental philosophy, and Latin American cultural critique, it argues that writing is not an instrument for transmitting ideas but the very condition of the subject's production: it is from within void, lack, and limit that the act of writing acquires its meaning. Confronted with the algorithmic fluency that generates text without a subject, without mortality or responsibility, the manuscript proposes reading artificial intelligence not as a simulacrum but as the ontological consummation of the Blanchotian disaster — a hollowing out that leaves everything intact on the surface while cancelling from within the subjective position that makes writing possible. Against this backdrop, the figure of Bartleby emerges as a political model: neither nostalgic denunciation nor technological celebration, but active subtraction — inhabiting the gap between what the machine produces and what the subject refuses to produce. To write today is, ultimately, an act of resistance and political courage.

Keywords: Writing, void, existential traces, artificial intelligence, politics, subjectivity.

Resumen: Este artículo explora el acto de escribir en el siglo XXI como una práctica subjetiva, política y filosóficamente situada, amenazada y reconfigurada por la irrupción de la inteligencia artificial generativa. Desde coordenadas que articulan el psicoanálisis lacaniano, la filosofía continental y la crítica cultural latinoamericana, se argumenta que la escritura no es un instrumento de transmisión de ideas sino la condición misma de producción del sujeto: es desde el vacío, la falta y el límite que el acto escritural cobra sentido. Frente a la fluencia algorítmica que produce texto sin sujeto, sin mortalidad ni responsabilidad, el manuscrito propone leer la inteligencia artificial no como simulacro sino como consumación ontológica del desastre blanchotiano, un vaciamiento que deja todo intacto en la superficie mientras cancela por dentro la posición subjetiva que hace posible escribir. Ante este escenario, la figura de Bartleby emerge como modelo político: no la denuncia nostálgica ni la celebración tecnológica, sino la sustracción activa, habitar la grieta entre lo que la máquina produce y lo que el sujeto rehúsa producir. Escribir hoy es, en última instancia, un acto de resistencia y de coraje político.

Palabras clave: escritura, vacío, huellas existenciales, inteligencia artificial, política, subjetividad.

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General mapping of the void of writing. The eternal journey between beginning, process, return, possibility, and impossibility

Writing is a journey. We are an endless journey that we neither wish nor can conclude. What an era experiences does not always find an immediate correlate in the languages available to name it; between events and their forms of elaboration, an interval often opens, marked by remnants and opacities. From here, we can affirm that we are part of the eternal process of becoming existential wayfarers, wandering among endless manuscripts that are sometimes only rewritten in other eras.

Faced with the imperative of the era that pushes us toward a *jouissance* without law or contour, writing acquires the status of a subjective invention. It is not merely a bulwark against anguish; it is the fashioning of a singular knot where the subject manages to knot together their saying, from their very fault and their inability to say everything. Writing is not only the creation of a limit to the endlessness of ideas and thoughts, but the very creation of a subject.

Thrown into the journey of life, from birth we forget our condition as foreigners, as exiles. The act of writing returns us to that forgotten moment: on the threshold that opens, a new dialogue is born between the page, the word, the idea, and time. We return to our strayed origin, we abandon the invisible exile that dominates and conquers us in everyday life, and we return to ourselves and to others. We become part of the world's text once more.

Why write about writing in the 21st century? It is a question that can only be answered in the very process of constructing new questions. An era like ours feigns access to and the possibility of total, absolute, universal, and profound knowledge, while non-knowledge disguises itself as possibility with the help of the illusions and ideals that the irruption of the digital age has incorporated into the contemporary imaginary.¹

Our becoming is shaped by rapid reconstructions of emptiness. The present is characterized by a search for the massification of empty modalities that attempt to provide quick answers to the masses thirsting for experiential and existential filler. No one seems positioned to face failure, defeat, and the hole of our spirit; no one remains open to questions. To avoid the question as a philosophical, human, and existential instrument and tool is to assume the arrogance of limiting knowledge, hindering research, and promoting repressive forms of exercising critical thinking, responsibility, duty, and the intellectual role.²

We are immersed in an era of change and transformation, an era that makes possible a different horizon, but in which we also find ourselves navigating coordinates that suffocate us: delusions, fragilities, and exile. An overwhelming solitude that, nevertheless, allows other cartographies of writing to emerge from change and a new turn. Writing, research, knowledge, knowing, and modalities of learning are reconfiguring their territory; in this process, writers and readers also find themselves in a position to wander, like tourists in our own land. We are invited to weave the new writing of the 21st century in the very process of writing it.³

¹ Nicol A. Barria-Asenjo, *El arte de escribir en el siglo XXI: Universidad y nuevos circuitos del conocimiento* (Madrid: Miño y Dávila, 2026).

² *Ibidem.*

³ *Ibidem.*

Throughout the journey this document invites the reader to embark on, we have succinctly addressed various problematics that represent significant moments in our contemporary world: novelties and events that will shape new modes and forms in the near future. This exploration is approached from diverse angles and latitudes with the aim of providing an initial general mapping that illuminates dark zones of the present. Writing is not a flat, light, clean, and clear zone; it is porosity, fragmentation, nuance, disguise, breath. Life and death converge in the writerly process to reach the beyond accessible only through writing. Therefore, the diversity of ideas, authors, themes, and dilemmas gathered here merely reflects the oscillation, discontinuity, tension, and dilemmas of writing and traversing the written in the 21st century.

We must clarify from the outset that these changes create specific difficulties for universities. Walters and Wilder found that ChatGPT frequently fabricates bibliographic citations:⁴ in their study, 55% of GPT-3.5 references and 18% of GPT-4 references did not correspond to actual works, and many of the actual references still contained substantial errors. When students incorporate these kinds of results without critical analysis, the evidentiary basis of their writing is compromised.

These difficulties raise a broader question about the importance, relevance, contributions, responsibility, and duty of intellectuals in our era, as we have previously noted. If Large Language Models (LLMs) can generate fluent prose, structure arguments, and compile references on demand, it is tempting to conclude that the traditional functions of the intellectual—synthesizing knowledge, explaining complexity, and articulating stances—have become redundant.

Coeckelbergh and Gunkel reject this conclusion,⁵ arguing that the advent of communicative AI does not eliminate the work of thought, but rather repositions it: since machines produce language without comprehension, judgment, or responsibility, the responsibility for providing these qualities falls more heavily, not less, on human beings. Therefore, the intellectual's contribution is redefined rather than displaced.

In this sense, when machines can generate plausible text on a large scale, the distinctly human task becomes the critical evaluation of that text: asking whether a claim is justified, what

⁴ W. H. Walters y E. I. Wilder, “Fabrication and Errors in the Bibliographic Citations Generated by ChatGPT”, *Scientific Reports*, 13 (2023): 14045.

⁵ M. Coeckelbergh y D. J. Gunkel, *Communicative AI: A Critical Introduction to Large Language Models* (Polity Press, 2025), 88.

interests it serves, and what it omits. This aligns with the cognitive concern raised by Gerlich:⁶ if intellectual work is uncritically delegated to machines, the capacities that make intellectuals useful atrophy. The intellectual's duty in the era of machines is, therefore, partly a duty of resistance to comfort: a commitment to continue performing the laborious reasoning that machines can imitate but cannot carry out.

This redefinition also carries an explicitly political dimension. Coeckelbergh and Gunkel emphasize that communicative AI is embedded in specific economic and institutional structures, and that the systems shaping public discourse are owned and controlled by a small group of powerful actors.⁷ According to their argument, a key responsibility of intellectuals is to make these structures visible and question them, rather than taking them for granted. The relevance of intellectual work, then, lies not only in the production of knowledge, but also in the critical analysis of the conditions under which it is currently produced, including those imposed by the tools that intellectuals themselves use. It is in this vein that this writing emerges. In developing this document, various perspectives are presented that seek to contribute to broadening contemporary debates and unveiling the current conditions in the field of writing, research, and the meaning of writing today. Closely related to this is the question of the role of writers and the political importance of writing. If, as argued above, authorship is increasingly defined by responsibility rather than by the production of prose, then writing retains a political function precisely because it remains the act by which a person endorses a claim and submits it to public judgment.

This raises an essential question: what space is left today for other modes of writing, forms that depart from the argumentative, linear, and single-authored essay that has long been the norm in scientific communication? On this point, Landow's earlier work proves instructive.⁸

Writing before the rise of Large Language Models (LLMs), Landow argued that digital technologies, and hypertext in particular, were already destabilizing conventional text by dispersing authority across networks of linked passages and shifting power from the author to an active reader who chooses their own path through the material. He interpreted this development as a literal embodiment of critical-theoretical ideas about the decentered text and

⁶ M. Gerlich, "AI Tools in Society: Impacts on Cognitive Offloading and the Future of Critical Thinking". *Societies*, 15, núm. 1 (2025): 6.

⁷ Coeckelbergh y Gunkel, *Communicative AI...*, 31

⁸ G. P. Landow, *Hypertext 3.0: Critical Theory and New Media in an Era of Globalization* (3rd ed.). Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006.

the blurred boundary between reader and writer.⁹ Landow's analysis suggests that the essay was never the only possible mode of writing, and that nonlinear, collaborative, and reader-directed forms have long been available alternatives.

The remaining task and challenge are to ensure that experimentation with form does not become a way to evade the responsibility that, as previously argued, remains the essence of authorship. This question takes on a radical relevance today. In the age of information overload and the immediacy of artificial intelligence, writing is a way of reminding us that the limit and resistance are more necessary than ever.

While artificial intelligence operates from the completeness of the algorithm—saturating the space with pre-existing, statistical knowledge—human writing resists because it introduces the contingency of error and the dignity of the stumble. We are facing new modalities of saturating the void and raising human experience toward a beyond by unfolding new ideals that expand the pre-existing gaps. In this impasse, AI appears, generating texts from fullness and totality, while the subject writes—or attempts to write—from the void, as a poetic act.

In the civilization of digital consumption, where gadgets are designed to immediately plug lack, the materiality of writing reintroduces the dimension of time and waiting. To pause and write is to step off the connective flow and inhabit the pulsation of lack. Writing remains an act of creation, a poiesis where a subject not only exposes their ideas or thoughts, but also their limit; that is, their being that never finishes coming into being.

Much has been theorized about the act of facing a blank page. There, each word, each sentence, and each paragraph functions as a creation that borders the void. That is why we do not write to show our certainties, but, on the contrary, to expose our uncertainties.

Writing is the staging of a not-knowing; it functions as a dam for the endlessness of ideas. It is the way in which the subject gives an account of an unknowing knowledge, that which psychoanalysis has conceptualized as the subject of the unconscious. In writing, we are spoken by language. With each line, we allow ourselves to be surprised by what falls onto the page; something that produces the writer and engenders them.

It is not the writer who creates writing: it is writing that creates the writer in a movement like an infinite loop, constructed by desire and the right distance and abandonment. It is not the struggle and the search for control, the battle against non-knowledge that dominates the page. It is the page that, in its elusive condition, by harboring the opacity of our not-knowing, reveals

⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*. Fortieth Anniversary Edition. Trad. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (John Hopkins University Press, 2016).

to us who we truly are. Given this state of affairs, we are left only with the possibility of exploring the thesis that writing is a limit of experience by virtue of its capacity to operate and act beyond the limit; it is the limit and the possibility of radical fissure that extends and widens the limit itself, a matter we will address in the first section of this journey.

**Writing amidst diffuse historical times.
Writing in the face of the limits of experience**

Walter Benjamin identified a problem that remains prevalent in much of the debate surrounding culture and intellectual production. In *Experience and Poverty* (1933) and later in *The Storyteller* (1936), he observed a transformation in the historical conditions that made the narration of experience possible. Narration occupied a central place in this framework because it allowed for the circulation of the lives between generations. Experience appeared neither as a private event nor as a mere sum of individual experiences. It took shape through a work of elaboration that made its transmission possible.

Benjamin's concern was not limited to the disappearance of a literary form. What he perceived was a broader modification in the conditions for communicating experience. In *The Storyteller*, he noted that the faculty of exchanging experiences was in decline and that this loss compromised a fundamental dimension of collective life. The storyteller's authority stemmed from their capacity to elaborate the lived and transform it into shared knowledge. In *Experience and Poverty*, Benjamin, for his part, recognized a fracture between the intensity of historical events and the possibility of incorporating them into significant experience. What was weakening throughout this process was the very transmission of the lived.

The issue addressed by Benjamin can be understood considering the transformations associated with the expansion of cognitive labor. Franco Berardi has analyzed this knot through the notion of semiocapitalism, developed in *The Factory of Unhappiness* (2003). His reflection is not limited to pointing to economic transformation. It points to a mutation of sensibility under conditions of semiotic acceleration. Language and cognitive activity enter processes of valorization, while the production of signs becomes part of the mechanisms of economic extraction. In this regime, informational abundance does not necessarily broaden experience, as it can also weaken the time required to elaborate it. The question of writing then appears linked to a specific difficulty: how to maintain a reflective relationship with the lived when the rhythms of circulation tend to fragment attention and reduce the time available for elaboration.

These transformations also modify the conditions under which writing is produced. Intellectual production today is increasingly permeated by performance metrics that determine criteria for legitimacy, systems of permanent evaluation, and demands for productivity. Writing participates in institutional circuits that organize circulation and orient research efforts. The question of writing cannot be completely detached from these conditions because it interrogates the times available for elaboration and the ways in which an era limits what it considers worthy of being thought.

Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui's work introduces an additional difficulty. The category of *ch'ixi*, explored in *Ch'ixinakax utxiwa: A Reflection on the Practices and Discourses of Decolonization* (2010), incorporates a critique of homogeneous conceptions of history and narratives organized according to an accumulative logic. *Ch'ixi* is called a coexistence marked by tensions that never reach a definitive resolution. History appears composed of overlapping layers that continue to operate even when dominant discourses consider them closed off. In *Sociology of the Image* (2015), Rivera Cusicanqui extends this reflection by questioning the primacy of lettered regimes of knowledge. Images do not appear there as secondary materials in relation to the text. They preserve historical sedimentations that often escape immediate conceptualization. The gaze then acquires its own cognitive density, capable of registering that which does not always find a place in written language.

This shift makes visible a key tension for understanding writing. Benjamin's question about narratable experience reappears under conditions of semiotic acceleration and the economic capture of language. Rivera Cusicanqui shifts the problem even further by reminding us that not all historical experience can be reduced to a stable narrative form. Her reflection shows that history is not exhausted by what achieves discursive formulation, because there are layers of experience that continue to operate even when they lack a narrative capable of fully integrating them. Under historical conditions characterized by the acceleration of information flows and the increasing incorporation of language into processes of economic valorization, this distance becomes especially significant.

In this sense, writing is not a transparent instrument of recording, as mentioned in the opening paragraphs of this article. A distance remains between experience and its elaboration, a distance that no formulation can completely cancel. Remnants persist that overflow the available narratives and yet continue to exert effects on the present. Writing returns to this distance because it is within it that the work by which a society elaborates its historical experience is played out. Current conditions give this problem a singular configuration. The

difficulty of translating experience into languages capable of making it intelligible does not disappear; it reappears under different historical conditions.

The following section will explore an example of these translation difficulties within a political context. Each era incorporates new debates and theoretical-conceptual shifts that warrant attention due to the transformations woven into the construction of the new global text and the narrative of the present. Writing is also a constant dialogue between textual and experiential traces, an inside and outside that unfolds between life and death and the search for the beyond.

Existential traces and writerly traces. Writing as the deprivatization of thought

In the previous section, we generally addressed the question of the meaning of writing as an (inherently human) activity. To continue and deepen this idea, in this section we assert that writing should also be approached as a matter concerning the tense relationship between the self and the other. Or, more precisely, between the private ownership of one's own cognitive and emotional interiority and the socialization of that same interiority through writing.

From this perspective, writing itself can be considered—such is the deliberately provocative thesis that follows—as an intrinsically political activity. In the act of writing, the subject is ultimately driven toward a radical form of decentering: by committing thought to writing, the groundwork is simultaneously laid for its socialization and, with it, for the possibility of submitting to the criticism of others. Along these lines, Byung-Chul Han argues that rituals should be understood as mechanisms of social stabilization that constitute a counterpart to the modern dynamic of narcissistic introspection. As Han himself writes:

The narcissistic process of internalization develops an aversion to form. Objective forms are avoided in favor of subjective states. Rituals elude narcissistic interiority. The ego's libido cannot cling to them. Those who surrender to rituals must ignore themselves. Rituals produce a distance from the self, a self-transcendence. They depsychologize and deinternalize those who practice them.¹⁰

If Han describes rituals not only as a mechanism of social stabilization, but also as a counter-model to modern forms of narcissistic interiority, in which the subject is encouraged (at least

¹⁰ Byung-Chul Han, *The Disappearance of Rituals: A Topology of the Present*, trad. Daniel Steuer (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2020), 6-7.

temporarily) to adopt a reflective distance from their own feelings and mental states, this idea can be applied equally to the process of writing.

In the act of writing, the subjective inner world is transformed into an objective form and, ultimately, exposed to the critique of the external world. In this sense, the act of writing also resists the narcissistic tendencies identified by Han. Although the subject—along with the convictions and affective states that constitute human subjectivity—remains the primary source of written expression, the practice of writing for publication nonetheless entails a deprivatization of these worlds of thought.

The development of generative AI—particularly in the form of large language models—poses new challenges for the practice of writing. While the writing process depends on a form of subjective decentering, the subject remains an indispensable condition for this process. The deprivatization of the subjective worlds of thought and feeling that occur through writing depends precisely on the author's thoughts and feelings for this process to take place. However, with the emergence of chatbots, there is a risk of losing nothing less than the very principle of human subjectivity. Applied to the university context, Antonio Cerella illustrates this point as follows:

Today, thanks to so-called generative AI, students can complete university assignments—and even entire courses—simply by giving a few prompts. For the first time in history, it's possible to be a student without actually studying. To use a sports metaphor, it would be like winning Grand Slam tournaments without ever setting foot on the court: a paradox that would deprive the tennis player of the practice that defines them.¹¹

Applied to the writing process in general, it is not only the ritualistic character of this activity that is lost. Rather, as can also be inferred from Cerella's analysis, what disappears is the subject itself (in the figure of the author) upon which the writing process is grounded. In this way, it is possible to produce an endless amalgamation of texts without the prerequisite that originally had to be present for their production: the author themselves. However, in doing so, the emancipatory character of writing is also lost. The unlimited expansion of textual production, made possible by the emergence of AI, contradicts the phenomenon of human creativity, which in turn depends on limitation.

As Todd McGowan points out, capitalism is characterized by an inherent form of excess, while artistic work has always been governed by the principle of limitation. In writing, the

¹¹ Antonio Cerella Antonio Cerella, “What We Get Wrong When We Talk about ‘AI’”, *The Philosophical Salon*, 30 de marzo de 2026, <https://thephilosophicalsalon.com/what-we-get-wrong-when-we-talk-about-ai/>

author must grapple with limited resources—time, fatigue, inventiveness, and so on—to ultimately render their inner world into writing and thereby deprivatize it.¹² If these limits disappear, the very principle of creativity is negated. Yet it is precisely the encounter with limitation that, as McGowan argues, constitutes a fundamental condition for the possibility of emancipatory renewal. It is only the existence of limits that gives rise to the emancipatory impulse to engage creatively with those limits and thus create something genuinely new, as is particularly evident in the very act of writing.

Writing from and within the void of writing

This invites us to consider the importance and condition of writerly practice. That is to say, in contrast to the *jouissance* of thought, writing operates as the limit of desire. It is a possibility of the human that transcends the human within itself and weaves together other modalities and worlds of the human and the horizon of humanity. It reflects the inside and the outside, of the limit and the limitless, and therefore, it returns us to the critique of knowledge and non-knowledge.

It is here that the dimension of the letter is introduced.¹³ Unlike the spoken word, which is carried away by the wind, or thought, which flies endlessly, writing locates a place for the subject. By rendering words on paper, the infinite imaginary is brought to a halt. The letter embodies, materializes, and therefore stops the infinite drift of meaning; it acts as a boundary and a littoral against the chaos of the mind.

Writing, then, is the courageous act of relinquishing the illusion of control over our ideas, allowing the opacity of what is lacking to take shape. It is moving from the infinity of the mind to the pacifying limit of the page. Writing is not transferring a finished product from thought but rather encountering the fragmentation of what one intended to say. It reveals, undeniably, that the subject is not the absolute master of their discourse: language imposes its own rhythm and its own equivocations. One writes from what is lacking, never from what is superfluous. It is looking at and traversing the labyrinths of the void.

By operating as a littoral that causes a boundary, writing paradoxically produces relief. It is an act of loss, a renunciation of the perfect and infinite idea that inhabited the imaginary.

¹² Todd McGowan, *Pure Excess: Capitalism and the Commodity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2025), 23–24.

¹³ Jacques Lacan, “Lituraterre”, in *Otros escritos*, 19-29 (Paidós, 2012).

It is an encounter with the limit of our own thought, where letting go of the reins allows the truth of an unknowing knowledge to appear.¹⁴

In thought, ideas float in a dimension where everything is possible, an illusion of totality that often borders on anguish or delirium. Thought appears infinite, ethereal, and often overwhelming. Spoken words flow, change, and can sustain the illusion that we understand each other. Writing, on the other hand, acts as a littoral: it separates solid ground from the ocean of the unconscious. Once inscribed, meaning stops. It can no longer be infinitely modified; what is written is written.

The pencil or the keyboard imposes a different speed than that of thought. In that lag, the “perfect” idea breaks down. For something to exist on the page, one must accept the loss of the thousand ideal versions that lived in the imaginary. It is accepting the limit of language: that the word will never fully capture the Thing. However, its therapeutic and pacifying power lies precisely in that renunciation. By giving contour to the void, by setting a limit to the endlessness of ideas, the subject finds rest. Paper ultimately sustains what the subject cannot do: the impossibility of saying everything.

This leads us to the next question: what does it mean to write today in the 21st century? The question resurfaces when a machine can produce text in industrial quantities without a subject to guide it, without a writer to pay the price of the sentence, without mortality to sustain it. Forty years before what we now call generative artificial intelligence existed, Maurice Blanchot published *The Writing of the Disaster* in 1980, a book that conceived of writing as an ontological condition of passivity, fragmentation, and the erasure of the subject. What then seemed like an ascetic demand for a literary avant-garde has, in recent years, become a technical architecture available to any user with an internet connection. This inversion of signs, where the ethical condition of Blanchotian writing emerges as the default functioning of a system of statistical tokens, demands to be thought through using the tools that Slavoj Žižek develops as parallaxic thinking.

In Blanchot, the writing of disaster does not name a literary genre or a historical theme like the Holocaust or the bomb; it names a structural condition of the act of writing. Writing consists of exposing oneself to a passivity that is not to be confused with inactivity but rather designates an active surrender to an anonymous force that exceeds the subject, the neutral, the *il y a*, the impersonal murmur of language that precedes every particular voice. The writing

¹⁴ Jacques Lacan, *El Seminario de Jacques Lacan, Libro 11: Los cuatro conceptos fundamentales del psicoanálisis* (1964) (Paidós, 2003).

subject pays for this exposure with their own erosion, with the loss of their self, with the impossibility of asserting style without falling into posturing. A phrase from the book encapsulates this position: “the one who writes is exiled from writing; there is their homeland in which they are not a prophet”.¹⁵ Exile is not a biographical metaphor; it designates the ontological position where writing can only occur if the writer relinquishes sovereignty over their language, if they accept never being at home within their own work, if they pay with their own erosion for access to something that no “I” could say.

The writing of generative artificial intelligence bursts onto this scene with a promise worth examining. A machine trained on massive corpora produces text without anyone erasing themselves, without anyone paying the price of the sentence, without anyone being exiled from anything. Passivity is already accomplished, the neutral functions as a fundamental technical condition, the subject is structurally absent from the beginning of each generation, and yet the text emerges, flows, saturates the screens. Any reader of Blanchot will recognize here, at first glance, all the operations that the disaster demanded, except one: the subject who actively erases themselves. The machine has no “I” to erode because it never had one. This prior absence allows us to read artificial intelligence, at first glance, as a technical simulacrum of the disaster, as that structure that Žižek has traced in non-alcoholic beer, caffeine-free coffee, fat-free cream, humanitarian war without victims, the form of consumption without what once resisted within it.

But there is a phrase by Blanchot, written on the book's opening page, which, in light of artificial intelligence, changes the meaning of the entire analogy: “disaster ruins everything, leaving everything as it was”.¹⁶ The formula doesn't oppose ruining and leaving intact; it superimposes them, makes them coincide in a single operation whose paradoxical structure defines disaster. Ruining everything while leaving it intact is exactly what artificial intelligence does every time it produces text. Texts continue to circulate, papers are published, books appear in bookstores, and at the same time, the subjective position that was a condition of writing is canceled from within, emptied of the mortality that sustained it. The reading of the simulacrum then shifts back on itself, because the appearance of the simulacrum was the appearance of consummation. Žižek names this structure with a formula that captures the Hegelian operation of appearance. “Things do not simply appear, they *appear to appear* [...] they can also appear

¹⁵ Maurice Blanchot, *La escritura del desastre*. Trad. Cristina de Peretti y Luis Ferrero (Madrid: La Dicha de Enmudecer, 2015 [1980]), 61.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

to just appear, concealing the fact that they are what they appear to be”.¹⁷ Artificial intelligence appears to be a simulacrum of disaster, and it is precisely this appearance that conceals the fact that artificial intelligence is the ontological consummation of disaster itself.

This shift between the two readings, where the appearance of the simulacrum reveals the consummation it concealed, is what Žižek calls parallax in the strict sense: the shift itself between two perspectives, not the two positions that the shift connects. The Lacanian Real, in parallax thinking, is precisely this change from one perspective to the other, without its own substantial density, perceptible only in movement. The two readings are irreducible to each other not because they are interpretive options that the reader chooses, but because neither can stand without the other, because the contemporary disaster is precisely the impossibility of choosing between simulacrum and consummation when both are operations of the same technical machine. Bartleby, the Melvillean copyist whom Blanchot reads as the limit figure of writing, anticipates this position without knowing it, because his job was to copy from the archive and his act was to subtract himself, to say “I would prefer not to” without proposing an alternative, without denouncing or embracing, keeping open the crack between what the machine produces and what the subject refuses to produce.

Writing today in the 21st century, then does not consist of denouncing artificial intelligence from the nostalgia of the mortal writer, nor in celebrating it as a liberation of the self, because both responses close the parallax crack that constitutes the contemporary disaster. Denunciation restores the impossible purity of a subject prior to the machine. Celebration transforms the loss of the subject into a technical achievement, neutralizing the disastrous quality of the loss. Both suture the irreducible displacement between simulacrum and consummation that algorithmic fluency works to erase by producing endless text. The political act of the 21st-century writer consists of operating on that crack, inhabiting it with Bartleby's awareness, sustaining the subtraction against the pressure toward flow that the machine circulates like breathable air. What kind of writing would be capable of exhibiting the displacement instead of suturing it? What use of the machine can transform its fluency into an exposure of the crack? What would remain of the Bartlebyan act when the copyist is algorithmic? The question, in the end, is not whether it is still possible to write against artificial intelligence. The question is whether we have the political courage to write about the disaster that artificial intelligence has come to consummate.

¹⁷ Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View* (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 2006), 29-30.

New forms of the writerly journey in the 21st century.

Provisional conclusions

Writing has no closure. The desire to write, that overwhelming and indomitable desire to write, finds its loop within the very writerly act. The moment an idea is concluded, its threat appears, its opposite, along with the need to rewrite and continue the process of writing. That is what is terrifying, overwhelming, and sublime about writing, and what sustains and inhabits the writer. Reaching the closure of this document also means leaving new ideas to chew on and develop elsewhere.

In conclusion, we will emphasize that scientific writing is the central practice through which knowledge is constructed, argued, and accounted for within a contemporary academic community. However, in the 21st century, the conditions of writing have changed profoundly, altering the roles of evaluators, publishers, and editors, as well as the figure and role of the author. Generative artificial intelligence (AI), and in particular large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT, have transformed scientific writing, which was potentially a largely individual cognitive task, into a distributed process involving human authors and text generation systems.¹⁸

If text can be co-produced with machines, authorship itself becomes unstable. Or, rather, in a sense, the instability of authorship in the face of the dynamics of writing is reinforced and reconfigured in a new way.¹⁹ Traditionally, authorship signifies both intellectual property and responsibility for the claims in a work. Stokel-Walker documented how several early articles listed ChatGPT as an author, leading publishers such as Nature and Science to rule that AI tools cannot be credited as authors precisely because they cannot be held responsible for the content or give their consent to its publication.²⁰ Thus, the author remains responsible, but the nature of their role changes: when writing, summarizing, and editing are partially delegated to an LLM, the human contribution shifts from generating prose to directing, verifying, and endorsing it. Lund *et al.* present this as an ethical reconfiguration of academic publishing, in which transparency regarding the use of AI becomes part of what it means to be a responsible author.²¹

¹⁸ Enkelejda Kasneci, *et al.* "ChatGPT for good? On Opportunities and Challenges of Large Language Models for Education", *Learning and Individual Differences*, 103 (2023): 102274.

¹⁹ Derrida, *Of Grammatology*.

²⁰ C. Stokel-Walker, "ChatGPT Listed as Author on Research Papers: Many scientists Disapprove", *Nature*, 613, núm. 7945 (2023): 620-621.

²¹ Brady D. Lund, *et al.* "ChatGPT and a new academic reality: Artificial intelligence-written research papers and the ethics of the large language models in scholarly publishing". *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 74, núm. 5 (2023): 570-581.

The ever-distributed nature of authorship becomes visible, as the operations and media of writing change.²²

One of the concerns with artificial intelligence (AI) in terms of academic writing is that what it produces, edits, or inspires is no longer “ours,” not only because the words are given by an entity other than the writer, but also because large language models (LLMs), like Claude, are based on the plagiarism of the work of others, as seen in the August 2025 \$1.5 billion settlement with Anthropic (*Bartz v. Anthropic PBC*, No. 3:24-cv-05417-WHA) for the illicit use of nearly half a million books in training its algorithms (Associated Press). However, on the other hand, when the use of AI renders a form of academic writing obsolete, such as the general information essay often assigned to first-year college students, then perhaps AI can be “thanked” because it has shown that that form of writing was of little value in the first place. In other words, if something can be replaced by AI, then perhaps it wasn't worth a human doing it in the first place. As John Warner states in *More Than Words: How to Think About Writing in the Age of AI*, “Instead of viewing ChatGPT as a threat that will destroy valuable things, we should consider it an opportunity to reconsider what we value and why”.²³ In this way, ChatGPT and similar tools can be seen as “an ally”, since “if ChatGPT can do something, then it probably doesn't need to be done by a human. It's quite possible it doesn't need to be done at all”.²⁴ This places the current era of academic writing in a state of openness: it's a time to dismantle what doesn't work and be as open as possible to the myriad ways of trying new forms of what does.

However, what AI challenges is not only the usefulness of specific writing tasks, but also ideas about the very meaning of writing. In “What We Teach When We Teach Writing: Adopting Generative AI through a Pedagogy of Writing Against”, John Warne Monroe states that “we urgently need to know what we teach when we teach writing, so that we can continue to teach it even when, under the pressure of technology, ‘writing’ comes to mean something very different from what it means now”.²⁵ The fear that Monroe develops, through a reading of Karl Marx and Bernard Stiegler, is that of proletarianization, or the alienation of the writer not from what they write, but from the kind of change and innovation that writing can entail: “Handloom weavers were alienated from their work; algorithmic consumers are alienated from

²² J. Schröter, “Autorschaft aus dem Blickwinkel der Akteur-Netzwerk-Theorie”, in M. Wetzel (ed.), *Grundthemen der Literaturwissenschaft: Autorschaft*, 625-631 (De Gruyter, 2022).

²³ John Warner, *More Than Words: How to Think About Writing in the Age of AI* (New York: Basic Books, 2025).

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

their ability to change their minds”.²⁶ Therefore, the work of 21st-century academic writing should not focus on the ability to write, but on the knowledge that writing can produce, that is, “a capacity to work toward singular and therefore non-producible conclusions that inhabit the uncharted space where creative intuition occurs”.²⁷ While Stiegler recommends the capacity to appreciate slow cinema, such as that of Alain Resnais, as an antidote to the kind of symbolic misery that leads to non-singular conclusions (such as voting for the far-right French National Front),²⁸ a brief attempt will be made here to show how singular knowledge can be produced in collaboration with a singular LLM actor, and that perhaps humans are not so unique to begin with.

In 2020, K. Allado-McDowell, founder of the Artists+Artificial Intelligence group at Google, co-wrote a novel with GPT-3 called *Pharmako-AI*. In short, Allado-McDowell doesn't claim that the AI is sentient, nor that it co-authored the book; rather, she describes a pruning²⁹ and purging³⁰ relationship to illustrate how the novel was created together. Allado-McDowell calls this technique a “hybrid discussion”³¹ in her introduction, because each interrupted the other, which is one possible way to subvert the banality of thought in both AI and human thinking.³² Similar reasoning was seen earlier in one of the benefits of AI: it can help us “figure out where humans are needed”³³ in terms of good and bad writing. Indeed, this bidirectional disruption is necessary because of what Hannes Bajhor calls “the paradox of ‘anthroponormative restriction’, according to which AI will only be considered sentient when it reflects human creativity, rather than generating a new kind of creativity of its own.”³⁴ Although the goal should be to incorporate such disruption into exclusively human writing, it is also about taking the lessons that AI can teach in order to move beyond old, ineffective modes of academic writing and teaching.³⁵

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁸ Bernard Stiegler, *Symbolic Misery, Vol. 1: The Hyper-Industrial Epoch*. Trad. Barnaby Norman (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), 93 y 98.

²⁹ K. Allado-McDowell, *Pharmako-AI* (London: Ignota, 2020), 93.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 101.

³¹ *Ibid.*, vii.

³² Cf. Brian Willems, “Get Angry at the Algorithm: Eugene Lim's *Search History*”, in *Anger and Change in Korean American Literature* (London: Palgrave, 2025), 123-147.

³³ Warner, *More Than Words...*, 6.

³⁴ Hannes Bajor, “The Paradox of Anthroponormative Restriction: Artistic Artificial Intelligence and Literary Writing”, *CounterText* 8, núm. 2 (2022): 264.

³⁵ The work of Anna Kornbluh, Krista Muratore, and Eric Hayot on their website *Against-AI* is an excellent resource for this purpose. See, for example, the writing assignments “Connections Papers” and “Annotation Assignment” as ways to keep students writing, inspired by how AI has highlighted the limited usefulness of previous assignments (Kornbluh, Muratore, and Hayot).

In summary, the current era of writing consists of abandoning old forms but not limiting new ones; in other words, the task of the contemporary writer is to try to open the kind of knowledge that writing produces to possibilities hitherto unknown. This is what we have tried to promote and develop in this writing, which is woven from the collectivity. The remaining task is complex; this is only the first step in arduous labor that we must begin.

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