Generative Artificial Intelligence and the Reconstruction of Subjectivity in Literary Creation

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Abstract: *Generative artificial intelligence can participate in literary composition by proposing plots, producing passages and revising prose. Its participation raises questions about the position from which a work is imagined, judged and presented to readers. This paper examines the reconstruction of literary subjectivity through theoretical argument and analysis of research on assisted writing. It distinguishes subjectivity from observable interaction, the institutional attribution of authorship and evaluations of textual quality. Literary theories of authorship and dialogue are brought into conversation with accounts of writing processes and technological mediation, with attention to their different explanatory purposes. A comparative framework considers intention, lived experience, narrative form and responsibility across conception, drafting and revision. The analysis identifies tensions involving delegated intention, narrative anchoring, simulated experience, stylistic specificity and public attribution. It proposes that agency can be sustained through active reconsideration of creative aims, consequential aesthetic judgement, attention to experiential and cultural particularity, and accountable relations with readers. These are analytical proposals, not a validated measure of subjectivity. Existing studies concern specific interfaces and writing tasks and cannot establish a universal effect on literary identity. The paper reports no new experiment or interviews; its focus is short fiction and novel writing.*

Keywords: *generative artificial intelligence; literary creation; subjectivity; authorship; aesthetic judgement; human-AI collaboration*

1. Introduction

A writer may accept a generated sentence because it supplies a rhythm that the draft lacks, yet reject its explanation of a character's motive. The difference concerns what the story is prepared to say about that character. Generative assistance enters literary composition at this level of judgement as well as at the level of wording. A continuation can establish a motive, resolve an uncertainty or introduce a relation that the writer had not considered. Examining who typed the final sentence therefore leaves important questions about the work's perspective unanswered.

Literary authorship has long been understood through language, conventions and relations with readers. Barthes challenges the authority of authorial intention as the final explanation of a text[1]. Foucault examines the author function through the ways discourse is classified and attributed[2]. These approaches complicate an account of writing as the expression of an entirely self-sufficient individual. They do not imply that the writer's experience disappears or that choices about a published work no longer require an accountable person. Generative AI makes the distribution of compositional activity newly available for examination within this longer discussion.

This paper asks how literary subjectivity can be understood when generative systems contribute to conception, drafting and revision. Its focus is short fiction and novel writing. The method combines theoretical interpretation with analysis of selected studies of assisted writing; it includes no new experiment, interviews or claims about the author's own practice. The argument concerns the relation between experiential position, creative intention, aesthetic judgement and responsibility. Interaction records and reader ratings can illuminate parts of this relation, but their meanings depend on the task and the questions asked. The proposed framework follows the decisions through which a writer gives generated material a place in a literary work, including decisions to leave it unused. Examples are illustrative constructions; none is presented as a quotation from a writer or a model output.

2. Theoretical Foundations and Research Scope

2.1 Subjectivity, agency and attributed authorship

In this article, literary subjectivity concerns the position from which experience becomes meaningful and is given form. It includes a writer's historically situated perception and evaluative commitments, together with the changing relation to the work during composition. A narrator's perspective may express, displace or challenge those commitments; the narrator cannot simply be identified with the biographical author. Subjectivity therefore exceeds control over an interface. A writer may retain every available editing option while finding that the draft no longer addresses the difficulty that initially mattered. Subjectivity is also formed through this activity. A writer can discover an attachment or prejudice in the effort to make a scene convincing, then find that the emerging form resists an earlier self-description. Such encounters complicate the idea of expression as the transmission of an already complete inner position. They also make uncertainty within the writer relevant to the analysis of technical assistance.

Agency names the capacity to act within the compositional situation, including the capacity to reconsider a purpose. Authorship concerns the attribution and organisation of a work in literary and institutional contexts. Foucault's author function is useful for examining that organisation, but it is not a measure of a writer's felt ownership or a rule for assigning legal rights[2]. Textual quality is another question, addressed through particular critical criteria and readers' judgements. These concepts can interact without becoming interchangeable. The analysis asks how choices express or revise a literary position, what constrains those choices, and how the resulting work is offered to others.

2.2 Dialogue, interpretation and technological mediation

Bakhtin's account of dialogue and heteroglossia locates the novel within socially differentiated languages and voices[3]. This perspective helps explain why a literary voice is never produced outside inherited forms of speech. Its application to generated writing requires care. A model's production of several registers does not establish several experiencing subjects, and a change of register alone does not create a sustained dialogue among social positions. The relevant literary question is how the work organises those voices: whose speech is given authority, whose language is mocked, and which experiences remain difficult to express.

Barthes's challenge to author-centred interpretation also leaves room for examining composition[1]. Readers can produce meanings that exceed what a writer intended, while the writer remains involved in the decisions through which the text reached them. Hayles's account of cognitive assemblages provides a vocabulary for considering processes distributed across people and technical systems[4]. Applied here, it directs attention to how an interface and generated material participate in writing. This theoretical extension does not demonstrate machine consciousness or an AI's lived relation to a story. Functional participation and subjective experience require distinct arguments.

2.3 Writing processes and the scope of available evidence

Flower and Hayes describe writing through recursively organised processes of planning, translating and reviewing[5]. Here, translating means expressing ideas in visible language, not translation between languages. Their model supports examining how a new passage can alter an earlier goal, although it predates contemporary generative systems. Creative intention need not be a complete plan fixed before composition. Boden's distinction among combinational, exploratory and transformational creativity offers a further way to examine changes in possible forms[6]. Applying these categories to a literary decision requires attention to the conventions being used or revised; a surprising continuation alone does not establish a transformation of a creative space.

This purposive review combines twelve sources on authorship, technological mediation, writing processes and human-AI collaboration. Sources were selected for their relevance to the decisions and relationships involved in composition, with no claim to exhaustive coverage. Logs can show requests, acceptance and revision; interviews can report experiences of voice or control; reader evaluations describe judgements under stated conditions. These forms of evidence address different questions. The framework connects them to literary subjectivity through theoretical interpretation, keeping descriptions of observed behaviour separate from proposals about desirable practice. The studies' tasks, participants and interfaces constrain the conclusions drawn from them. Longer literary projects and changing author-reader relationships remain only partly represented.

3. Creative Processes and Comparative Framework

3.1 Dimensions of literary participation

A comparison should distinguish the contribution of generated material from the literary decisions made through its use. CoAuthor records interactions in creative and argumentative writing with GPT-3, making selection and editing trajectories available for analysis[7]. Those trajectories cannot directly establish what a writer experienced. An exploratory preprint examining thirteen professional writers using Wordcraft, a LaMDA-based assistant, reports needs concerning voice, control and the fit with established writing practices[8]. These sources support examination of compositional participation while leaving open how an individual writer relates the process to a continuing literary practice.

Table 1 separates seven dimensions of that relationship. The framework is an analytical proposal, not a scale on which more interaction indicates greater subjectivity. Intention concerns what the work pursues; experience concerns the standpoint from which its particulars acquire significance. Plot and style give that significance a narrative form. Aesthetic judgement determines how proposals fit or unsettle the work, while reader relations and responsibility concern its public existence. These dimensions overlap in a concrete decision. Changing a narrator's explanation of an event can alter plot, distance from a character and the moral position that readers encounter.

Table 1 Dimensions for analysing participation in literary creation

Dimension	Possible AI participation	Reconfiguration and conditions
Intention	Suggest themes or directions	Purpose can shift through acceptance and reconsideration
Experience	Generate plausible particulars	Plausible details gain meaning through situated interpretation
Plot	Propose events and resolutions	Proposed events gain authority through consequential selection
Style	Offer registers and phrasing	Voice develops through appropriation and revision of registers
Aesthetic judgement	Supply alternatives or commentary	Acceptance depends on the work's aesthetic commitments
Reader relations	Simulate anticipated responses	Address changes with anticipated and actual interpretation
Responsibility	Contribute publishable material	Distributed production requires accountable endorsement

3.2 Conception, drafting and revision

A generated suggestion can enter at different stages and return in altered form. An idea accepted during conception may become a constraint during drafting; a sentence rejected during revision may reveal the voice the writer wishes to avoid. Wordcraft interface research provides an example of interactive support for story writing[9]. Its design is one arrangement of participation, not a general sequence that all writers follow. The stages in Table 2 identify occasions for analysis within the recursive process of composition. The formal Wordcraft study compares different arrangements of AI assistance, so it cannot establish an advantage over wholly unaided writing. Its short writing sessions also differ from the sustained development of a novel. The professional-writer study provides another perspective, through an exploratory report of extended use, without resolving those differences in method or literary scope.

Materials such as draft versions and accounts of a decision can help reconstruct these occasions. Their interpretation requires the literary context. Replacing many words may leave a generated plot's assumptions intact, while retaining a passage may follow a considered decision about its effects. Research on psychological ownership and authorship in personalised postcard generation further indicates that felt ownership, perceived authorship and public attribution need not coincide[10]. Its setting is not professional literary creation, but the distinction cautions against inferring a stable authorial identity from a single declaration or interaction measure.

Table 2 Analytical questions across the writing process

Stage	AI participation	Author decisions	Materials	Analytical question
Conception	Propose premises and possibilities	Set or revise creative aims	Notes; rejected directions	What gives the project its purpose?
Drafting	Offer passages and continuations	Choose viewpoint and development	Drafts; alternatives	How does participation shape form?
Revision and completion	Suggest changes or commentary	Judge effects and accept responsibility	Versions; final text	What position does the work sustain?

4. Tensions in the Reconstruction of Literary Subjectivity

4.1 Delegated intention and shifts in the project

A writer can request possible directions before deciding what a story should examine. Suggestions may help articulate an uncertain intention, but they can also supply an organising purpose that passes without scrutiny into later drafts. Consider an illustrative story initially concerned with a worker's unresolved attachment to a closed factory. A proposed reconciliation with a former manager would change the conflict and the kind of resolution the story offers. The issue is whether the writer recognises and accepts that change. Intention remains capable of development; the tension appears when a convenient continuation acquires the authority of a deliberate creative commitment.

4.2 Narrative anchoring and convergence

An early plot proposal can provide a structure around which later decisions accumulate. Once characters and scenes support it, alternatives may become harder to imagine. Doshi and Hauser found higher creativity evaluations and greater similarity across stories when participants had access to GPT-4-generated ideas in an eight-sentence story task[11]. That result does not measure the subjectivity of novelists. A study of argumentative writing also found reduced content diversity with InstructGPT assistance, while no statistically significant reduction was detected in the GPT-3 condition[12]. These bounded findings make convergence worth examining, without establishing that every model or literary use produces it.

Increased textual similarity is insufficient evidence of diminished literary value. Repetition is part of genre, and a familiar plot can support an unfamiliar perspective when the narrator's position, distribution of knowledge or temporal structure changes. Conversely, a lexically varied passage can preserve a conventional judgement about a character. For this framework, convergence becomes a concern when generated suggestions repeatedly narrow the positions a writer can recognise and consider. That condition would require examination of drafts and rejected alternatives alongside the finished work. Collective measures of similarity can motivate such inquiry, but cannot decide whether a particular reuse of form is derivative, critical or deliberately conventional. Literary interpretation must account for how recurrence functions within the work and how the writer understands its place in the developing project.

4.3 Simulated experience and experiential significance

A model can supply a plausible description of grief, fatigue or embarrassment without demonstrating an experience of those states. Fiction has always allowed writers to imagine lives beyond their own, so autobiographical possession cannot be the sole criterion of legitimate representation. The question concerns how a work gives experience a particular significance. A description of an empty room may fit many stories; its meaning changes with what a character refuses to notice or remembers incorrectly. Generated plausibility can supply material for that work, but cannot settle which omission, association or contradiction matters to the perspective being developed.

4.4 Personal voice and cultural position

A stylistic revision can change the relation between a character's language and the narrator's authority. Smoothing an irregular sentence may remove an awkwardness through which social distance was being expressed. Preserving every irregularity can also turn a character's speech into a display of difference. Bakhtin's account makes the organisation of voices relevant to this judgement[3]. A writer's position is expressed through the relations among registers as well as through distinctive vocabulary. Cultural specificity therefore requires more than recognisable local details. It includes whose terms organise a scene and whose account is allowed to remain unresolved.

4.5 Attribution and expressive responsibility

Readers encounter a published work under a name and within expectations shaped by genre and presentation. A fictional first-person voice may invite an autobiographical reading even when the narrator is invented. Generated passages complicate the composition behind that invitation without determining how it should be understood. Psychological ownership and public attribution can diverge, as research outside literary production shows[10]. Expressive responsibility concerns the representations that an author and publishing context offer to readers. Explaining the technical source of a passage does not by itself answer a criticism of what the passage says about a person, community or experience.

5. Reconstructing Agency in Human–AI Literary Practice

5.1 Keep creative intention open to active judgement

A literary project can begin with an unresolved question, an image or a difficulty of perception. Articulating that beginning gives the writer a basis for examining the directions generated material introduces. The account need not prescribe an ending. In an illustrative story about an unexplained departure, the commitment may be to sustain uncertainty about what the remaining character knows. A proposed confession would then require a decision about whether the project has changed. The smoothness of the scene leaves that decision unresolved.

Active intention includes the freedom to make that change. Flower and Hayes's recursive account of writing helps explain how drafting can revise a goal[5]. What matters for this framework is the writer's capacity to recognise the new direction and relate it to a developing understanding of the work. A discarded possibility may clarify that understanding even when no sentence survives. Notes about an intention can aid reflection, but their existence is not proof of subjectivity. The literary question remains what the evolving narrative asks readers to attend to, and whether the writer can engage critically with the choices through which it does so. A broad intention can remain underdetermined even when it has been stated clearly. Describing a narrator as unreliable leaves open whether the unreliability concerns remembered events, social understanding or self-deception. Deciding among these possibilities establishes different relations with readers. An account of intention becomes useful when it reaches such consequences, while still allowing the completed story to trouble the writer's original explanation.

5.2 Make aesthetic judgement consequential in revision

Selection, refusal and revision matter when they change the work's relations of form and meaning. A generated passage may explain a character's motive from an omniscient position, while the surrounding story limits knowledge to another character's uncertain perception. Revising the passage involves more than replacing vocabulary. The writer must decide which knowledge the narration can claim, how inference enters the prose and what distance readers should maintain from the account. Aesthetic judgement becomes visible in these consequences for the story.

Close attention to rhythm and narrative time provides another route. A compact summary may advance the plot while removing a pause in which discomfort becomes perceptible. Keeping the pause can be justified by the work's emotional or ethical arrangement, even when a smoother continuation is available. Boden's account of creative possibilities can help ask whether a revision explores an existing form or changes its organising constraints[6]. Such interpretation requires reading the passage in the whole work. Neither the number of edits nor the proportion of generated words establishes the depth of judgement. A substantial decision can involve accepting a passage unchanged after considering its effects, as well as rewriting or refusing it.

5.3 Preserve the specificity of experience and cultural expression

Experiential specificity arises through relations among details. In an illustrative scene involving a village celebration, naming dishes and decorations supplies setting, but may leave the social experience unspecified. Who prepares the food, who is expected to serve and who leaves before the clearing-up can shape the scene's perspective. A writer using generated descriptions can examine whether those relations express the story's concerns or merely repeat a familiar cultural image. Particularity depends on the position from which the event is perceived.

The same examination applies to voice. A narrator may borrow an official phrase ironically, struggle to translate a family expression or leave a term unexplained because the imagined audience already knows it. These decisions organise

access to the fictional world. Bakhtin's dialogic perspective helps interpret the tensions between such languages[3]. It does not provide a formula for authentic cultural expression. Writers still need to assess their knowledge and the grounds of a representation, including what remains uncertain. Generated fluency should be tested against that position. The aim is to retain the possibility of difficult, incomplete or socially situated expression when those qualities belong to the work. Imagination, reading and research can extend a writer's access to unfamiliar experience. Their use still involves decisions about the limits of knowledge. A narrator may misread a situation, but the surrounding form can expose that misreading or silently endorse it. Examining this difference makes cultural position a question of narrative organisation as well as of the accuracy of individual details.

5.4 Distinguish contribution from responsibility

An account of collaboration can identify where generated material entered the process and what the writer did with it. The relevant distinctions include proposing an idea, supplying a passage and suggesting a revision. CoAuthor demonstrates how some of these interactions can be recorded[7]. A record can support discussion of participation, but it does not decide the meaning or responsibility of the published text. The writer's relation to the final representation requires attention even when its wording began elsewhere.

Responsibility also extends beyond individual selection. Editors and publishers help establish how a work is presented, while technical systems shape the options encountered during composition. Hayles's account supports examining this distribution of participation without assigning identical kinds of agency to every component[4]. If an autobiographical framing invites readers to treat an event as experienced, questions about that invitation require an account of the work's presentation. Describing AI involvement can contribute to such an account, with detail appropriate to the context. It cannot substitute for engaging with the representation itself. These are questions of literary and expressive accountability; the framework does not determine copyright or other legal ownership.

5.5 Understand authorial identity through readers and criticism

An author's identity develops through reception as well as composition. Readers may hear a voice the writer did not consciously plan or identify a cultural assumption the writer failed to question. Barthes's challenge to the authority of authorial intention makes this openness central to interpretation[1]. Generated assistance does not close that relation. A claim that a passage was selected deliberately can explain a compositional decision while leaving readers free to dispute its effects.

Literary criticism can therefore examine how a work sustains its perspective, handles difference and organises attention, alongside an appropriately bounded account of its production. Evaluations in a short-story experiment, such as those reported by Doshi and Hauser, address particular criteria under particular conditions[11]. A continuing literary identity requires a wider horizon of works and responses. Authors can articulate what they accept responsibility for, explain significant choices and remain open to interpretations that exceed their intentions. Readers need not reconstruct every interaction with a model to discuss the text. The relation becomes more intelligible when claims about production, lived experience and literary merit are stated distinctly and remain available for critical examination.

6. Conclusions and Limitations

6.1 Subjectivity as a situated literary relation

Generative AI introduces compositional proposals that writers can adopt, transform or refuse. Their significance depends on the position a work develops through them. The framework presented here connects experiential standpoint and creative intention with aesthetic judgement and expressive responsibility. It treats agency as part of that relationship while retaining the difference between observable activity and the writer's experience of composing. Authorship also has an institutional and interpretive existence that cannot be reduced to the origin of individual sentences.

Reconstruction of subjectivity is therefore understood as a reorganisation of these relations within assisted writing. A writer can reconsider the purpose of a story, use an unexpected proposal to discover a formal possibility or challenge the assumptions embedded in a fluent continuation. These possibilities require examination in particular works. The five proposed approaches concern how literary decisions become consequential, how cultural and experiential specificity is maintained, and how the work is addressed to readers. They offer questions for criticism and reflective practice, with no claim to a universal scale of authorial presence.

6.2 Limits of the argument and further inquiry

The analysis draws on selected theoretical accounts and studies whose tasks, interfaces and participants differ. Short-story evaluations, argumentative writing studies and personalised text generation cannot establish the long-term effects of AI assistance on a novelist's subjectivity. The article includes no new observations with which to test the proposed framework. It also gives limited attention to poetry, drama and collective literary traditions, where the organisation of voice and attribution may require different questions. Theories of authorship and cognitive mediation remain interpretive resources whose application here is explicitly analytical.

Further inquiry could combine close readings of successive drafts with writers' accounts of particular decisions and records of the material available at those moments. Such evidence would need to preserve disagreements between reported intention, observed activity and textual effect. Reader studies could examine how knowledge of the production process affects interpretation without assuming that preference measures authorial subjectivity. Longer-term work would be needed to understand changes across a writer's practice. The relevant question is how a literary position is formed, revised and recognised through particular relations of writing and reading, with the kind of evidence appropriate to each part of that process.

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