Special Issue

Franz Kafka in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Message from the Guest Editor

The year 2024 marks the 100th anniversary of the death of Franz Kafka. His enigmatic texts continue to engage new approaches and readings, and with the arrival of widespread access to text generation on artificial intelligence platforms, it seems not only timely but natural to explore Kafka and his oeuvre in the light of Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) and our world today. Kafka's themes of alienation, anxiety, and guilt lend themselves to our thoughts about A.I. and the changes that it can bring to the way we learn, think, create, and reason. In Kafka's texts, protagonists often meet bureaucracies, machines, or even individuals that seem to function according to incomprehensible—or at least arbitrary—rules and logic that are not only unpredictable, but also need not really answer to us as humans. We encounter these strange creations in both the longer novels and the shorter texts, and I believe they lend themselves to new responses to Kafka's work given our current A.I. conundrum, which could clearly be termed "Kafkaesque.".

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