

AI as Mega-Pastiche

Summary

Pastiche is a central and constitutive concept in the philosophical work of Fredric Jameson. Jameson defines pastiche as a form of “dead language”: a neutral recombination of completed styles, indifferent to both historical depth and individual subjectivity. It is precisely this structural potential of pastiche that proves analytically productive for understanding the rapidly expanding domain of artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence is immanently disposed toward the production of mega-pastiche, that is, toward the generation of virtually limitless combinations drawn from the totality of humanity’s cultural archive. At least in principle, AI mega-pastiche may operate upon the entire sedimented field of human culture – at minimum, its digitized strata – rendering the combinatorial horizon effectively infinite.

The mechanical infinity of pastiche, when intersecting with the selectivity of

human imagination and with the stochastic randomness of AI hallucinations that nonetheless claim semantic and aesthetic legitimacy, produces an epistemic – and potentially aesthetic – condition without historical precedent. Such neutral, non-teleological combinatorics may ultimately bring postmodernism to an end, understood here as a nostalgic and increasingly monotonous regime of cultural entropy. In this sense, AI mega-pastiche does not merely reorganize cultural memory but destabilizes the very conditions under which knowledge, originality, and truth claims can be distinguished. It marks a shift from aesthetic judgment toward combinatorial saturation, in which meaning emerges not from intention or expression but from scale and probabilistic recombination, and signals a transition from postmodern cultural play to a hyperhuman regime no longer governed by human finitude, memory, or imagination.

Keywords: postmodernism, artificial intelligence, pastiche, aesthetics, hyperhumanism.