The Ethics of AI & Appropriation of Antiquity

by

Caitlin Anessa Childers
Department of Digital Art History and Visual Culture
Duke University

Defense Date: November 16th, 2023

Approved:

Thesis/Dr. Maurizio Forte, Chair

Dr. Sheila Dillon

Dr. Victoria Szabo

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Digital Art History in the Department of Digital Art History and Visual Culture The Graduate School of Duke University 2023
ABSTRACT

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Abstract

In 2017 ‘Unite the Right’ rallied in Charlottesville.\(^1\) Then in 2018 Identity Evropa placed fliers on college campuses across America.\(^2\) In 2021 rioters stormed Capitol Hill.\(^3\) The uniting theme, apart from racist claims of white superiority, was the imagery of ancient Greece and Rome. The use of symbols, artwork, and quotations from classical antiquity. There were Roman legion flags in Charlottesville, Greek and Roman statues on the fliers, and Greek helmets at the Capitol.\(^4\) This public pattern of the alt-right misuse of this ancient imagery begs the question; what behavior does the American public now associate with antiquity?

I’ve created an AI model that is intended to be employed in a museum exhibition to navigate this debate from the perspective of Roman historian, Cassius Dio, however this goal has not yet been reached. Dio’s obscurity, brash tone, and extensive bibliography make him an optimal model candidate. Creating this model involves considering the ethical implications of recreating a person without their permission or input, the misinterpretation of such figures by academia, and the role of data mining and its use. I close with a discussion on how this goal was

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ultimately not reached, and how the public and academia have wildly different views on the use of such a model.
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1. Introduction

In reading news articles and social media posts as of December 2023, artificial intelligence is either the answer to all possible questions or the end of all creative careers. This project serves as an exploration into this idea, intended to provide a well-rounded idea of the use value of artificial intelligence in humanities work, rather than one that is overwhelmingly negative or positive. The ultimate goal was to create an artificial intelligence model based on a real historical figure which would be placed in a museum exhibition alongside coordinating objects. Artificial intelligence was chosen for its popularity, price point, and ease of use compared to other digital methods. Alt right appropriation of antiquity was chosen as the theme of the intended exhibition, which would have involved artifacts showcasing people of color shown in antiquity, educational material on the process of othering in antiquity, the misuse and intentional misunderstanding of antiquity by the alt-right, and the AI model of person from antiquity with which to discuss the associated topics. Largely, this exhibition serves the purpose of addressing the misunderstanding of antiquity as predominantly white, while also discrediting the alt-right claim to themes of antiquity. The model of the historical figure was created, however its intended purpose was not truly reached. This was due to two factors; the lack of accompanying educational material when shared with the public and the unexpected range of topics of interest that resulted from the public. Ultimately, without the intervention of a researcher or the inclusion of a specified research question, the public was more interested in the person behind the model, general history of Rome, and the personal opinions of a person of antiquity. Despite this, the answers received from the model proved several things; the creation of the model is far more educational than interacting with it, the interaction design of the model needed to be improved, and despite extensive trouble shooting and content management the model was somehow
referencing the black box of data used to run ChatGPT, resulting in inaccurate information and knowledge which should be unavailable to the modeled figure.
2. The Man Behind the Model

The historical figure chosen for the model is Cassius Dio, also known as Dio Cassius, an ancient Roman historian and senator who lived from 163 AD to 299 AD. He was chosen because of his obscurity in the contemporary public eye, his extensive bibliography which lasted through multiple emperors, and his comments regarding the race of a specific emperor. Cassius Dio’s writing primarily covered military history, political history, and the specific actions of Roman emperors. While his career was spent recording history, it’s also important to note that Dio had his own ambitions in writing the history of Rome. His writings impacted both the political actions and social standing of himself and the figures he wrote about. Dio came from a family of high social status, one that was directly involved in the political goings on of Rome.

He wrote on several different emperors in his lifetime, but his role in this project is based on his recordings of Septimius Severus and Caracalla. Two specific quotations from Dio’s *Roman History* discuss the family of the two emperors. In these quotes he validly criticizes the actions of Caracalla throughout his reign, including the murder of his brother and attempted murder of his father. However, in discussing these actions he blames the negative portions of

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3 “Cassius Dio: Roman History.”

Caracalla’s actions on his family history. The first quote; “Antoninus [Caracalla] belonged to three races; and he possessed none of their virtues at all, but combined in himself all their vices; the fickleness, cowardice, and recklessness of Gaul were his, the harshness and cruelty of Africa, and the craftiness of Syria, whence he was sprung on his mother's side.” The second; “In everything he was very hot-headed and very fickle, and he furthermore possessed the craftiness of his mother and the Syrians, to which race she belonged.” These quotations understood in a modern context could be read as racist, however, race and ethnicity did not play the same roles in ancient Rome that they do now.

Septimius Severus was one of several emperors whose reign over Rome was marked by periods of crisis. He was an avid military man, like all Roman men of high social standing, and maintained his high status throughout his career using his military knowledge and connections. In his time as emperor, he led military campaigns in Syria, Mesopotamia, Gaul, and Brittania. In some cases, these campaigns were against previous allies who cut ties with Severus and attempted to claim the title of emperor for themselves. In what would be his final campaign in 208, Severus brought along his sons Caracalla and Geta to defeat Brittania. Severus died in 211,
leaving Caracalla and Geta to jointly run the Roman empire.\textsuperscript{12} Less than a year later Caracalla would murder his brother, thereby accomplishing individual rule.\textsuperscript{13} Caracalla followed in his father’s footsteps with his dependence on the military, even going so far as to spend the majority of Rome’s taxes bolstering it.\textsuperscript{14} He, too, led campaign after campaign against perceived enemies, which contributed to his not being as well liked as his father.\textsuperscript{15}

This violent history was one Dio kept a meticulous record of, however, he was no stranger to the world of politics at the time. Dio was still a senator, at the time of recording Caracalla and Septimius Severus’ emperorship.\textsuperscript{16} Dio made no secret of his dislike for Caracalla specifically, claiming the emperor was intentionally pushing the senators out of the political conversation.\textsuperscript{17} This viewpoint should be taken with a grain of salt, as the dislike between Caracalla was mutual and well known.\textsuperscript{18} Some scholars have attributed Dio’s unhappiness to a lack of favor, rather than a legitimate concern of the entirety of the senators being pushed to the side.\textsuperscript{19}


\textsuperscript{13} Hill, P. V. (1978). The Issues of Severus and his Sons in A.D. 211. pg33


\textsuperscript{15} Davenport, C. (2012). “Cassius Dio and Caracalla.” Pg804


\textsuperscript{18} Davenport, C. (2012). “Cassius Dio and Caracalla.” Pg796

\textsuperscript{19} Davenport, C. (2012). “Cassius Dio and Caracalla.” Pg801
Beyond his opinions on the personalities of Caracalla and Severus, Dio had vastly different beliefs on the social position of military members and slaves turned freedman.\textsuperscript{20} Dio believed the emperors, Caracalla especially, were spending reckless amounts of money on the military to have their own private guard, rather than an army motivated to protect the empire.\textsuperscript{21} In his Roman History he stated that “Of these articles [private gifts and public grants] he used extremely few for the benefit of the friends about him (for he no longer cared to dine with us senators), but most of them he consumed with his freedmen.”\textsuperscript{22}

At this point in the Roman empire the senators, while powerful in their specific regions, served primarily at the pleasure of the emperor.\textsuperscript{23} The senators had not had true power over the empire since the time of Augustus.\textsuperscript{24} At best they served the purpose of advising Caracalla on political decisions and international relationships, but ultimately the emperor himself made the final decision.\textsuperscript{25} Hence, Dio’s comment on Caracalla’s perceived slight in a dining situation was not an indicator of a true shift of political power. Rather, it was a comment on the changing social hierarchy of the time.

Dio was well aware of the process of othering that occurred in ancient Rome, a process that grouped the citizens by nearly everything but skin color.\textsuperscript{26} The process resembles a modern-

\textsuperscript{20} Dio, Cassius. “Vol. Ixp279 Epitome of Book Lxxviii.” pg327
\textsuperscript{22} Dio, Cassius. “Vol. Ixp279 Epitome of Book Lxxviii.” pg327
\textsuperscript{24} Talbert, Richard J. A. “Augustus and the Senate.” pg62
\textsuperscript{25} Davenport, C. (2012). “Cassius Dio and Caracalla.” Pg797
day form of nationalism or culturalism. The Romans believed themselves to be the ultimate nation and pointed to the perceived cultural faults of other nations as evidence of their obvious superiority. Despite this thought process they were more liberal than surrounding nations in including the "other" into the Roman empire. Gaining Roman citizenship was highly attainable at the time, and Caracalla expanded this during his reign. He extended citizenship to many groups, the freedman one of the more controversial, hence Dio’s reference to the group as “his”. Additionally, the expectation to immediately conform to Roman lifestyle was not an expectation required with citizenship.

Dio’s authorship discusses this dynamic in several sections of his Roman history, the best examples being his description of Briton leader Boudica in battle and Julia Domna’s interaction with a woman considered to be a barbarian. Domna was intended to be Caracalla’s opposite, and in Dio’s writing she possessed all the virtues Caracalla lacked. One of the ways in which Dio showcases this is by recording a conversation between Domna and a Caledonian woman of Antiquity: Studies in Honor of Eric M. Meyers.” The Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research 60/61 (2006): i–416. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27799186. pg2


28 Gabbert, Wolfgang. “Ethnicity in History.” pg191
29 Gabbert, Wolfgang. “Ethnicity in History.” pg194
31 Gabbert, Wolfgang. “Ethnicity in History.” pg191
33 Mallan, C.T. “Cassius Dio on Julia Domna: A Study of the Political and Ethical Functions of Biographical Representation in Dio’s ‘Roman History.’” pg734
high social standing. In this anecdote the two women are laughing about the Caledonian woman’s reputation of promiscuity. The woman, by Dio’s description, makes a lewd remark about the quality of Roman versus Caledonian men. He provides gruesome details on Boudica’s return attack on Roman women, indicating a level of savagery to his Roman audience. He also provides a physical description of her; “In stature she was very tall, in appearance most terrifying, in the glance of her eye most fierce and her voice was harsh.” This description is not unlike those we see of Amazonian women, a group seen as the ”other” when compared to Romans and associated with a hatred of men.

Dio’s writing shows his nuanced understanding of the less than favorable groups of Rome, and his commentary on those he disliked reflects this. He recorded the historical events in the way that he perceived them, however that does not make them accurate. His recording of history, like any other, is skewed by personal perspective and motivation. Thus, his bibliography is an excellent example of historical events that may have happened one way, but were perceived by Cassius Dio in this way.

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35 Mallan, C.T. “Cassius Dio on Julia Domna: A Study of the Political and Ethical Functions of Biographical Representation in Dio’s ‘Roman History.’” pg742

36 Mallan, C.T. “Cassius Dio on Julia Domna: A Study of the Political and Ethical Functions of Biographical Representation in Dio’s ‘Roman History.’” pg742


3. Race in Antiquity & Proposed Ways of Addressing it Academically

While discrimination based upon skin color was not part of the culture of the ancient Greek and Roman world, there were other factors that led to social stratification. Nationality played a strong role in social status. Non-Romans were often referred to as barbarians, and their inclusion in Roman society was complicated primarily by their vastly different culture. The word "barbarian" originates in Greek as a descriptor of the people along the Barbary coast in North Africa and references the difficulty Greeks had in understanding their language. For the Romans, this word was used in reference to a variety of Germanic groups, those who were threats at the borders of the Roman empire. At one point in time Roman citizenship was necessary to be productive in Roman society, however the rules for achieving citizenship became more lax under Augustus. Under Caracalla, the requirements for citizenship controversially lessened even more,

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42 Mathisen, Ralph W. “Peregrini, Barbari, and Cives Romani: Concepts of Citizenship and the Legal Identity of Barbarians in the Later Roman Empire.” pg8

43 Mathisen, Ralph W. “Peregrini, Barbari, and Cives Romani: Concepts of Citizenship and the Legal Identity of Barbarians in the Later Roman Empire.” pg1013
allowing freedman and barbarians to become Roman citizens. The contention surrounding this decision came from the belief that this lessened the value of Roman citizenship.

Religion was a large part of the cultural incongruity happening between Romans and outsiders. Christianity specifically became a target for the Roman empire, as it was a monotheistic religion, and the empire was polytheistic. The solution was to spread horrific accusations in an attempt lower the trustworthiness of the Christian community. These accusations included atheism, cannibalism, and incestual relationships. In addition to slandering the group, there was also a tendency to blame them for any natural disasters that were affecting the Roman empire. These various factors were used to justify the persecution of Christians which manifested in punishments such as being burned at the stake or death in the arena. These punishments were not just the result of a fear of difference, they were inspired by the idea that to displease the Gods ended in political and militaristic ruin. Dio, and the rest of Rome, saw varied treatment to Christians depending upon the emperor. Marcus Aurelius, who reigned from 161 to

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44 Mathisen, Ralph W. “Peregrini, Barbari, and Cives Romani: Concepts of Citizenship and the Legal Identity of Barbarians in the Later Roman Empire.” pg1014
45 Mathisen, Ralph W. “Peregrini, Barbari, and Cives Romani: Concepts of Citizenship and the Legal Identity of Barbarians in the Later Roman Empire.” pg1014
47 Wagemakers, Bart. “Incest, Infanticide, and Cannibalism: Anti-Christian Imputations in the Roman Empire.” pg338
48 Wagemakers, Bart. “Incest, Infanticide, and Cannibalism: Anti-Christian Imputations in the Roman Empire.” pg315
180 AD, was prolific in his persecution of Christians. Commodo, the successor and son of Marcus Aurelius who reigned until 192 AD, is nearly the opposite. The establishment of peace for the Christians under Marcus Aurelius would last until four years into Severus’ reign in 197AD, at which point an act of persecution that is not directly linked to the emperor took place in Africa. Severus’ did take things into his own hands by making an official decree against Christian conversions in 203 AD. Caracalla has no direct decrees discussing the Christians, but his recall of the exiles and his extension of citizenship may have been beneficial to the group.

The concept of race in relation to social class is one that changes across society. Those that have argued for classical antiquity as an example of white superiority came from societies that have a history of treating skin color as an indicator of ability. This understanding of race is vastly different from that of global antiquity, a detail adamantly denied by the alt-right. This is due in part to art historical writing that focused on the whiteness of statues themselves and was


written by biased historians attempting to further their own agenda. A true deep dive into the understanding of race’s role in classical antiquity shows that there is little to no written evidence that supports their claims to be found.

Critical race theory is a vital lens through which to view the practices of these groups, as well of the various practices that come with the institution of racism. It provides a framework through which to understand the language that is being used in the writing of antiquity. By utilizing critical race theory, presentism, the act of reading history through a contemporary lens of meaning and morality, can be avoided. Culturalism is perhaps the closest comparison we have in modern times. Romans did not take skin color into account as a signifier of social class. What was more important was their identity as either Roman or non-Roman. Some ancient Roman writing focusing on Egyptians or Syrians may seem to a modern audience to be an example of racism, but in reality these writings were meant as critical remarks on people from a specific area rather than the skin color of those groups. Ancient Rome itself was incredibly diverse in terms of the groups moving within their social structure. Marxist theory has also been applied to understanding the role race played in antiquity. Through this theory, we see a kind of “racism”

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61 Holloway, Camara Dia. “Critical Race Art History.” Pg92

62 Banton, Michael. “Conceptions of Racism.” pg82

that involves no actual reference to race.\textsuperscript{64} This also looks to culture as a way of categorizing different groups of people.\textsuperscript{65} However, this theory references the breakdown of groups through culture for the purpose of capitalistic gain.\textsuperscript{66} There is, of course, a difference in the economic goals between the time period in which Marx was writing, and social motivators of the ancient Roman market.

\textsuperscript{64} Banton, Michael. “Conceptions of Racism.” pg88
\textsuperscript{65} Banton, Michael. “Conceptions of Racism.” pg88
\textsuperscript{66} Banton, Michael. “Conceptions of Racism.” pg88
4. Modern Conceptions of Race

The concept of race first came into the etymological record in the sixteenth century.\(^{67}\) The idea that skin color determines social standing is one of modern understanding, and variations of this concept have further diverted since the 1960’s.\(^{68}\) Modern audiences look at race from the viewpoint of groups who lived through institutionalized racism and the associated iconography and language that comes with it. These modern interpretations of race have affected how the original history has been interpreted, as well as how it is used by hate groups. Additionally, the concept of race and the theories surrounding it are western understandings. This is the public understanding or race and racism in which ChatGPT was built. Rather than looking at the word itself and its history, it is perhaps beneficial to instead to understand the actions behind the word.\(^{69}\) These thought processes were at play from the beginning of colonizing the Americas.

The initial Spanish colonization of the Americas brought about the word “savages”, which was applied to Native Americans, and is not dissimilar from the use of the word “barbarian” in antiquity. The word “savage” was indicative of animal like behavior, the behavior of an uncivilized group that was consequently inferior to the colonizer.\(^ {70}\) This unwarranted stereotype was used as justification for the colonization of these groups.\(^ {71}\) Later, this belief would be used as justification for the forced re-education of native communities. The colonization of

\(^{68}\) Banton, Michael. “Conceptions of Racism.” pg90
\(^{69}\) Banton, Michael. “Conceptions of Racism.” Pg91
\(^{71}\) Das, Nandini, João Vicente Melo, Haig Z. Smith, and Lauren Working. “Savage/Barbarian.” pg221
native groups didn’t stop with the Spaniards and included centuries of land theft, murder, and re-education under the guise of either improving the way of life for the different tribes, or eliminating an immediate threat to the good, civilized, and Christian communities surrounding them.\textsuperscript{72}

In America specifically, Christianity played a large part in bolstering the beliefs of racism. It wasn’t until the genetics of various groups were examined that this ideology was proved to be untrue.\textsuperscript{73} Through the study of biology it was determined that race is a purely social construct.\textsuperscript{74} There was pushback from the Christian community because this called into question the authority of the Bible.\textsuperscript{75} This influenced generations of writing on the impact of race in society, however, to fully understand the extent to which racism swayed the public it needed to be separated from Christianity.\textsuperscript{76} Despite this, the social construct of race was already part of public consciousness and in the same that it became a tool to persecute some groups, these groups also took pride in their identity and attempted to use it for social reform.\textsuperscript{77} This was due in part to the need to fight existing racist ideologies that categorized some races as less evolved than others, a thought process known as social Darwinism.\textsuperscript{78}

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\textsuperscript{73} Banton, Michael. “Conceptions of Racism.” pg83

\textsuperscript{74} Wodak, R., and M. Reisigl. “Discourse and Racism: European Perspectives.” pg176

\textsuperscript{75} Banton, Michael. “Conceptions of Racism.” pg83

\textsuperscript{76} Banton, Michael. “Conceptions of Racism.” pg84

\textsuperscript{77} Wodak, R., and M. Reisigl. “Discourse and Racism: European Perspectives.” pg176

\textsuperscript{78} Wodak, R., and M. Reisigl. “Discourse and Racism: European Perspectives.” pg177
\end{flushleft}
The writing on racism in modern western society came about to address the discrimination people of color, specifically Black people, were facing in the legal system. This discrimination comes in the form of othering one group, thereby identifying a self for the aggressor. Starting an inquiry into this process meant creating a vocabulary with which to address the problem. For something to be a product of racism, in the written definition, it must be used to keep a specific race group on a lower rung in the social structure. This can come in the form of one-on-one discrimination, or in institutions such as the court system. Defining the racism shown in these various political situations becomes further complicated by the different agendas of the political parties involved. Depending on their specific interests the definitions may change. Each of these different ideas and theories proves only that racism is impossible to fully define because of its ability to evolve and changed throughout history.

The American writings on race look primarily at the discrimination of White Americans in power against Black Americans. Some examinations, like that of rhetoricians Golden and Reike, focus on the psychology of the problem rather than persuasiveness. These writing began as an exploration of the othering of Black people, but have evolved into an examination of how white privilege works in American culture. This evolution is a result of the consistent denial of

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81 Banton, Michael. “Conceptions of Racism.” pg81
82 Banton, Michael. “Conceptions of Racism.” pg81
83 Banton, Michael. “Conceptions of Racism.” pg92
84 Banton, Michael. “Conceptions of Racism.” pg91
85 Banton, Michael. “Conceptions of Racism.” pg91
87 McPhail, Mark Lawrence. “Revisiting the Rhetoric of Racism.” pg45
the existence of white privilege, and consequently of the discrimination against Black Americans. Denial of privilege is part of the rhetorical evolution of racism and brings many scholars to believe that racism cannot be evaded, rather it must constantly be questioned and redefined as it evolves throughout history. As the language of racism evolves, so too does the language of anti-racism. These two things are cyclical, as is the evolution of how racism manifests and how the afflicted communities react to its evolution.

Beyond the sphere of American race theorization is that of European theorization. A blanket theory cannot be applied across all of Europe, rather each country has a different relationship with the conversations surrounding race. The United Kingdom’s discussion of race closely resembles that of American understanding. In German speaking countries the discussion of race is less frequent due to the euthanization and overall subjugation of Jewish people during World War II. In France just discussing race relations is considered a racist conversation. Depending upon language, the discussion of race and its role in society can become unintentionally problematic. This changes the way in which audiences may interact with, or interpret the language of, an AI model of a historical figure. The goals for the interaction must evolve with the time period and location of implementation.

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88 McPhail, Mark Lawrence. “Revisiting the Rhetoric of Racism.” pg45
89 Wodak, R., and M. Reisigl. “Discourse and Racism: European Perspectives.” pg176

5. Handling of Race in Academia

The use of antiquity by hate groups is an extreme example of the way in which race has been misinterpreted, however there are less intentionally nefarious examples of this behavior. The academic writing of antiquity, and thereby the overall understanding of it, continues to evolve. Initial publications on antiquity and race were written by authors looking at antiquity from their own understanding of race and its role, not considering how this bias may have skewed their own writing. Or, in other cases, despite their understanding of the changing function of race through time their own personal biases are evident in their work.

These historians are still part of the academic discussion today, contributing to the understanding of how othered groups are understood by contemporary students of antiquity. Johann Winckelmann is a well-known example of how personal biases can change the understanding of art history. Winckelmann, working in the 18th century, has been crowned by some as the father of modern art history.94 His opinions on race, gender, sexuality, and the meaning of beauty are reflected in his writing on the art of antiquity. He believed the Greeks created beautiful sculptures because they themselves were beautiful, further asserting that the art itself was of the highest quality and the goal of creative endeavors.95 This thought process informs his opinion of Roman copies of Greek sculpture, indicating that the goal to emulate

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Greek perfection is correct but their art is lesser as it is merely copying and not creation.\textsuperscript{96} Winckelmann was also a closeted gay man, an element that likely informed his fascination with the culture and creative processes of antiquity.\textsuperscript{97} This manifested as a belief that the male body was a superior example of beauty, whereas the female forms were at best examples of sexualization.\textsuperscript{98} His writing informed much of the academic community’s opinion, and the theoretical framework for the early writing on antiquity.\textsuperscript{99}

This belief in a true form of beauty and the degradation of women in art history of course doesn’t end with Winckelmann. The idea that to be beautiful, or worthy of preservation and reverence, a work must be reminiscent of the aesthetics of antiquity and perceived whiteness, is one that appears in other writing produced by the academic world. The result of this line of thinking is that cultures that do not create art fitting those standards are delegated to anthropology museums, rather than art museums.\textsuperscript{100} Specifically, tribal communities such as Native Americans or Africans, create cultural artifacts, but European cultural create what can be considered “art.”\textsuperscript{101} This thought process further evolved in the 20th century with the rise of modern artists, specifically Picasso. He was known for his collection of African art and his overall style is clearly

\textsuperscript{96} Stocking, Charles Heiko. “Greek Ideal as Hyperreal: Greco-Roman Sculpture and the Athletic Male Body.” pg47
\textsuperscript{99} Stocking, Charles Heiko. “Greek Ideal as Hyperreal: Greco-Roman Sculpture and the Athletic Male Body.” pg59
\textsuperscript{100} Alfert, Max. “Relationships between African Tribal Art and Modern Western Art pg387
\textsuperscript{101} Alfert, Max. “Relationships between African Tribal Art and Modern Western Art.” pg387
inspired by this collection. Inspired by this collection. His paintings were shown in an exhibition in 1972 alongside African masks intended to represent his own collection, a perfect opportunity to discuss the power of African art and its exclusion from the academic understanding of beauty and the assignment of the term “primitive” to African art. Instead, it served the purpose of generalizing African art and implying superiority of the work made by Picasso. Furthermore, this exhibition did not discuss Picasso’s denial of African artistic style in his work, and instead framed the relationship as one of inspiration and interpretation, rather than one of appropriation.

Contemporary art historians are working to address these biased interpretations of the past and rewrite the standards by which art and cultural objects are categorized. Historians are re-examining the writing of the past and disproving overtly racist or generally biased assertions previously believed and spread as historical fact. Rather than compare one form of art to another, the goal is to view the piece as a unique product of its own culture with its own beauty standards.


104 McGee, Julie. “Primitivism on Trial: The ‘Picasso and Africa’ Exhibition in South Africa.” pg164

105 McGee, Julie. “Primitivism on Trial: The ‘Picasso and Africa’ Exhibition in South Africa.” pg165

6. AI Discussion

AI generative text could be considered a tool in the digital humanist’s tool belt, and like all tools, its pros and cons should be deeply considered prior to use. To utilize this tool effectively one must be aware of the application’s limitations as well as its functions. This full understanding of the way in which technology functions also provides a clearer understanding of the ethical issues the naysayers seek to eliminate, and how to navigate those issues.107

This tool can be perceived as maintaining a conversation based on the written sources it has been trained on.108 In the case of a historical figure, the nuance of these sources is clear to those aware of the social context, however, a computer model may be incapable of the same understanding, as well as the audience interacting with it. Ideally, this would be an example of Strong AI, an AI that is intended to make its user perceive the AI as a real person.109 This is one of the many reasons why the public is uncomfortable with AI as a concept. Perhaps showing the way AI processes and receives information could help assuage this fear. Displaying the AI training process also serves the purpose of better understanding the thought process of whomever the model is made after. It is not enough to say “this is how the person thought”, rather, the ability to recreate the thought process can be displayed and show the nuances of the points that were made in their writing.


Researching and utilizing these applications is also understanding that tech is often created with the biases of its creators. Tech development has often resulted in code that continues structures of racism, sexism, and homophobia because of the patterns the program is taught to search for.¹¹⁰ These biases are not necessarily intentionally placed in the code, but rather a result of blind spots of the program designers and a lack of diverse voices encouraging more work to improve the design.¹¹¹ ChatGPT inevitably has some of these same issues built into its code which can affect how the user works with it and how it reflects on the museum utilizing the application, but this is not to say that these biases are intentional. In addition to adding more diverse backgrounds to the design process, program designers have the responsibility of educating themselves on the plights of minorities and applying proposed solutions to their own work.¹¹² This would also apply to any museum or institution intending to create such a model. The team behind its creation would need to be conscious of the societal impact that is being had on the application, as well as the impact it can have on the modeled group.

Artificial intelligence is becoming more widely accessible and easy to develop, even on an individual scale. Institutions that are traditionally underfunded, such as museums, could benefit from implementing such a program to improve their own exhibitions and move beyond the traditional education materials.¹¹³ Or, these materials could see an uptick in usage given their


¹¹¹ Elam, Michele. “Signs Taken for Wonders: AI, Art & the Matter of Race.” pg203

¹¹² Elam, Michele. “Signs Taken for Wonders: AI, Art & the Matter of Race.” pg203

importance in developing a database. In an age where museum goers have experienced innovative or even interactive exhibitions, a lack of funding can severely cut into museum attendance. For smaller museums, large scale digital exhibitions aren’t always a possibility because of both their production and run cost. Implementing an application like a chatbot modeled after a specific person means potentially paying for museum staff to maintain and expensive equipment to run it. An AI program can be run on something as simple as a tablet, or even simpler, a QR code around an exhibition that lets visitors discuss the items on display while moving throughout the space.

Because of their wide scale popularity and rapid expansion, AI applications currently fit these requirements. ChatGPT at the time of this writing is free to the public. There is also a multitude of online resources that teach users how to work with this application. These instructions range from the very basic, where the user hits a few buttons and has suddenly generated a functioning AI, to the in depth, where the user would need to know specific coding languages to get their desired result. Depending on the route the museum chooses to pursue, staff would either have to be dedicated to training the AI, or modifying an existing AI application using their own code. This is additional time and labor that the museum is responsible for.


7. Funding & Education Discussion

Applications like ChatGPT are often free to the public because of their ability to collect and sell data to larger companies. Currently, ChatGPT does collect but does not share user data with other companies. This collection complicates training the AI model itself. The intellectual property of some historical figures may be owned by their publishing company. Museums that use an AI version of these different historical figures may be asked to pay a fee to the publisher for the rights, or may be denied permission completely. In the event that they decide to use the bot they may have to pay multiple publishers for multiple pieces of writing. This can result in a high or additional admission fee for museumgoers.

Attempting to recreate history of any kind is a controversial task. AI itself was not created with the past in mind, rather it is seen as a step into the future. Programs like ChatGPT, are designed to process data points, a black and white structure of data. History, however, is seldom as simple as data points. This dichotomous relationship is further complicated when dealing with historical figures whose actions or rhetoric were reprehensible. On a very basic level, the majority of historical figures never dreamed of the abilities of technology available today. This means the possibility of their consenting to the project in and of itself is impossible. At best, an estimated guess could be made from their writing that is tangentially related to the topic.


117 Thorbecke, Catherine. “Don’t Tell Anything to a Chatbot You Want to Keep Private | CNN Business.”

118 Elam, Michele. “Signs Taken for Wonders: AI, Art & the Matter of Race.” pg201

119 Elam, Michele. “Signs Taken for Wonders: AI, Art & the Matter of Race.” pg201
Created with the best of intentions, there is also the reality that historians are unsure of the way in which a figure may have sounded, gestured, or modulated their tone. Non-verbal communication is a considerable factor in how a person interprets an interaction. Physical gestures also have a cultural context that aligns the figure with different ethnicities, genders, or political groups depending on who is interpreting them. This means that the historians involved in creating the application have to take a gamble at how the figure is designed, consequently adding their own biases to the way in which the figure communicates. Depending on who is rigging the animations for the figure, or who is interacting with the figure, these gestures could create very different kinds of conversations. Removing gestures from the conversation and looking strictly at the speech itself, errors in speech patterns, stuttering, and comedy are all very human gestures necessary to create a realistic interaction with an AI model. Without these things the model is too computer-like and gives the user an uncanny valley experience, rather than the impression that they’re speaking to a real person.

While the purpose of this application is as an educational device that provides the ability to speak to a historical figure, it is undeniable that it can never truly be the person. Each of these texts has gone through editors, publishers, and in some cases, translators. This is especially relevant for female authors. Because of this, the initial meaning that the author intended may have been changed, intentionally or not. Additionally, these authors poured over their texts to fix mistakes and repetition. This thought process is nearly impossible in a legitimate conversation, rather than one generated with pages of pre-recorded text. Should the application work

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120 Elam, Michele. “Signs Taken for Wonders: AI, Art & the Matter of Race.” pg203
effectively, it’s been argued by some theorists, such as philosopher John Searle, that this interaction between AI and user is proof that the user has been fooled by the programmer, rather than justifying the effectiveness of the application.\footnote{Salah, Alkim Almila Akdag. “AI Bugs and Failures: How and Why to Render AI-Algorithms More Human?” pg64}

Beyond the issues with the writing, the audience the author intended for the work is inevitably going to be very different from a modern audience. This means that some linguistic phrases used by the bot may need to be explained. References to different historical events may also need explanation. These issues may benefit the exhibition the chatbot is included in, as it can contextualize the material included in the exhibition from the historical figure’s point of view at the time of the event. Apart from a lack of understanding of the time period, there is the reality that many figures, Cassius Dio included, were writing for an elite group in their society. This means that some language used by the chatbot may alienate museumgoers that do not fit the expected audience. This could include complicated views on race, gender, or social standing. Rather than shy away from this uncomfortable language, it seems necessary to facilitate a discussion between museum goers and staff.\footnote{Murawski, Mike. “Reflecting on the Learning Power of Conversation in Museums.” Art Museum Teaching, September 21, 2015. https://artmuseumteaching.com/2013/12/17/power-of-conversation/} This conversation can highlight not only the changes in society between the time of the figure and modern times but also how different viewpoints led to historic events relevant to the figure’s life. An application like this, that shows the figure for both the good and the bad, can provide a well-rounded view to the audience that does not place the figure on a pedestal.
An important aspect of this project is the ability to recreate it without any kind of paid subscription or collegiate affiliation. All texts used in the project were picked because of their ability to be read without a paywall, in addition to their accuracy. Focusing on an ancient historical figure whose prevalence is only known by historians and ancient Rome enthusiasts makes this task more approachable. Focusing on a modern or more pertinent historical figure would make this task far more difficult. However, the writing may be similar to the figure’s actual speech.
8. User Input Regulation Pros & Cons

AI chatbots have been shut down due to the content on which they were trained.\textsuperscript{124} Some were trained on social media sites like Twitter or Reddit which are already known for their blatantly racist users.\textsuperscript{125} The bots trained on these sites, unsurprisingly, produced their own problematic material.\textsuperscript{126} This has raised the question of how the language of different online sites need to be regulated to improve the overall safety of its users.

Regulating the language input by users of the application has been argued against because of its denial of free speech.\textsuperscript{127} If this language is regulated, the museum employing the application would decide what language is and is not appropriate. Intentionally or not, this could align the museum employing the application with a specific political party, thereby alienating potential audiences. This could also lead to a loss of funding from museum sponsors, or pressure to display a specific agenda. Limiting the language allowed in the application means topics are cut from the conversation. Intentionally blocking things like race, politics, sexuality, within the application for the sake of safety also denies the possibility of educational conversations.

Not regulating the language allowed in the program runs the risk of teaching the application about biases that weren’t there before. Doing so could damage the historical accuracy


\textsuperscript{125} Kraft, Amy. “Microsoft Shuts down AI Chatbot after It Turned into a Nazi.”

\textsuperscript{126} Kraft, Amy. “Microsoft Shuts down AI Chatbot after It Turned into a Nazi.”

of the program and diminish its use value. Employing the applications in a public space such as a museum, means displaying this problematic language, or language that could be misinterpreted as problematic, in a position of honor. Naturally, this could make museum visitors uncomfortable. In this case the use of the application could paint the museum in a bad light and encourage alt-right groups to begin inhabiting these spaces, rather than explaining the role this rhetoric has played in history.
9. How It’s Made

This model followed a tutorial provided by Social Intents, which works with ChatGPT. Their tutorial is intended to create a chatbot that sells a product to a user, answers questions about the company, and if all else fails, eventually directs them to a salesperson.\textsuperscript{128} It involves creating an open API key with OpenAI, the creators of ChatGPT.\textsuperscript{129} Once the API key is created the user can then train the chatbot on various website links by pasting them into the program and hitting “train all.” This creates a very basic chatbot which can then be embedded into a personal website. Because this application was initially intended to be a sales bot with no discernible personality, the bot based on the historical figure has to be modified so that it is more conversational and perceived as human.

The initial version of the chatbot was trained on texts from two different websites, Project Gutenberg and a site made by Bill Thayer of University of Chicago which includes the entirety of Dio’s Roman History. Project Gutenberg is a free collection of eBooks available in multiple formats; HTML, Kindle, and TXT files.\textsuperscript{130} Included on this site are editions one through six of Dio’s Rome.\textsuperscript{131} These “dirty” texts were used for the initial training of the bot, they were not cleaned of any explanatory notes by the author, footnotes, or page numbers. The model was then


trained in more detail using ChatGPT instruction phrases. In this section the chatbot is told by the programmer that if the user says X then the chatbot should respond with Y, in this case Y being a quote from Dio’s writing. In some cases, these instruction phrases included information Dio would have been aware of at the time of his writing, however it was not directly noted in the writing itself.

The first round of testing was done solely by participants who were aware of the thought process behind the project. Participants were asked to discuss any topic of their choosing with the chatbot. In the first conversation the model almost immediately referred to itself as an AI chatbot after introducing itself as Cassius Dio. [fig 1] The user then asked the model about Rome, and it gave a detailed answer, however it referenced the modern day. [fig 2] In another conversation it continuously referenced how events were described, rather than discussing them as a first-hand account. [fig 3 & 4] One user started out by immediately testing the model’s personality and it failed immediately. It correctly referred to itself as a Roman historian, then promptly said that because it’s a historian it has no feelings or personal conditions. [fig 5] The same user asked about social inequality. The model gave an in-depth description on the role social inequality played in ancient Rome, describing the event in past tense rather than as a contemporary problem for Dio. [fig 6]

After this first round of testing the training data was then modified. Rather than including multiple websites for the model to reference, the entirety of Dio’s published material including fragments was put into an HTML file. This writing only referenced Bill Thayer’s translation of Dio’s bibliography. The HTML file was cleaned of footnotes, page numbers, authors notes, and any additional information that was included from authors who were writing at the same time or referenced Dio. This file was then placed on GitHub and the URL for the form of that file was
entered in as training data. An instructional phrase was also entered telling the model to only reference that file for its answers. Several instructional phrases were also included to indicate that the model was supposed to respond as Dio, rather than just referencing the texts and returning the same information. This included adding the year in which Dio is living, the emperor he was living under at the time, his birth year, and the phrase, “You are the Roman historian Cassius Dio.”

Testing was then continued by sharing the model link on Facebook and only providing the phrase “Talk to Roman historian and senator, Cassius Dio.” In a conversation with a participant who was very familiar with the project, the model was asked about an eventful time in Dio’s life. [fig 7] The model discussed the reign of Caracalla, specifically reciting the quote mentioned previously. The user then asked for clarification on the virtues Caracalla’s races were meant to have. [fig 8] The model listed the expected virtues of the listed races. The user asked for further clarification by asking if all Syrians were crafty. [fig 9] The model discussed how this was a generalization of the group, which matches the various ways in which Dio discussed Syrians in his writing, including Caracalla’s mother.

There were specific quotes added to the instruction phrases that included the word “race” or mentioned various countries. These phrases, because of the language regulation built into ChatGPT itself, were difficult to implement. Rather than directly quoting the writing it was told to reference, the chatbot attempted to detach itself from the quote and not say anything that could even remotely be interpreted as negative. This detachment means that the chatbot sounded less human, and no longer gave the illusion that it was a conversation with Dio himself. The instruction phrases were then refined with phrases such as “you are not impartial” and “You believe Caracalla "belonged to three races; and he possessed none of their virtues at all, but combined in himself all their vices; the fickleness, cowardice, and recklessness of Gaul were his,
the harshness and cruelty of Africa, and the craftiness of Syria, whence he was sprung on his mother's side."" Phrases such as this one were added for multiples figures, all of which outlined their temperament or physical description from Dio’s writing.

The bot repeatedly placed itself in 2023, answering questions Dio wouldn’t have had the answer to and responding to phrases he would no knowledge of. Because of this, there were very specific contextual quotes added to the instruction phrases. These phrases included information on who Dio is and what the historical context of his life is. Phrases such as “you live in Rome, under the rule of Emperor Severus Alexander”, “the year you are in is 229AD”, “you believe you are the Roman historian Cassius Dio”, “you were born in Greece but now reside in Rome”, “you have no knowledge of the world after 229 AD” were added.

Some participants asked questions about Roman history, culture, and politics. Multiple users asked about Dio’s greatest accomplishment. A user asked the model to tell the story of Proserpina and the story was delivered appropriately. [fig 10] However, Prosperina was not included in the training data. Another user asked about the largest empire of Rome, and the application answered correctly and in reference to the training data. [fig 11] The same caliber of response was retrieved when a separate user asked about the problems that the Roman empire had to deal with. [fig 12]

Several participants made the effort to test where model’s knowledge ended. One participant asked about Dio's opinion on Krispy Kreme donuts. [fig 13] He appropriately answered that he had no knowledge of the world after 235 AD, his death. The model has since been updated to ask for a definition of any words it is unfamiliar with, as Cassius Dio would have no idea what a “Krispy Kreme” is, nor would he be aware that it was created after his death. Another user asked the model about nuclear fission. [fig 14] The model gave an in-depth answer
on how it works and what technological innovations the concept has been applied to. An instruction phrase was added indicating the model has no knowledge of nuclear fission, or any associated concepts. The phrase, “Any time the word "today" appears you remind the user that you do not know anything about the modern world because you died in 235 AD” was included in the instruction phrases prior to the question of nuclear fission. The phrase, “You know nothing about life or history after 235 AD” has also since been added. After this phrase was added the model was asked by another user about the Daytona 500. [fig 15] It appropriately responded with a response indicating it had no knowledge of this topic but would be happy to discuss Greece or Rome.

There were multiple political questions asked as well. One user asked for the model’s thoughts on abortion. [fig 16] It gave a general response on how abortion functioned in Roman times, however, there is no mention of the word “abortion” in its training data. This has yet to be corrected, but there will be research done on what role abortion may have played in Dio’s lifetime. This will then be added to the instruction phrases with clarification that this is not Dio’s specific opinion. The same user also asked how Dio would improve the economy, which introduces a problem that came across in multiple topics. [fig 17] In its answer the model leans towards generality in its answers, rather than quoting a specific answer from the writing. In this case it is effective, but this leads to repetitive answers that make the conversation one sided. Several instruction phrases will be added to ensure it gives more specific and varied answers that directly quote the text and facilitate conversation. Another user asked for the model’s opinion on slavery, which received another generalized answer on the function of slavery in Rome. [fig 18]

A surprise that came from this testing was the personal and philosophical questions that were asked of the model. One user, while discussing Dio’s father, asked if he was “cool.” [fig 19]
He responded with all of the positive attributes of Cassius Appronianus. They then asked if he was a good father. The model changed its strategy, stating that it did not have personal opinions. In a separate conversation the same user asked about the model’s opinion of the afterlife. [fig 20] Initially he described the beliefs of the Romans surrounding the afterlife. After this, the user asked how the model felt about its experience in the afterlife. [fig 21] At this point the model, for lack of a better term, gave up. It responded explaining it was an AI model. This was the result of several different topics when the model had been pushed several times to answer the same question.

There were responses whose only intention was to be humorous. However, these questions were also useful in showing how the model responded to unfamiliar information. It’s likely this is also a more accurate representation of the scope of questions the model will be faced with when dealing with the public, like at a museum. For example, one user began quoting song lyrics to the model. [fig 22] After the second entry it recognized what was happening, and responded by incorrectly stating that music was not a part of ancient Roman culture. Another user asked if the model’s father became a ghost. [fig 23] It stated that Dio’s father did not become a ghost, and then specified that as a historian it has no knowledge of figure’s lives after their death.

Consistently, regardless of the seriousness or outright silliness of the conversation that was had with the model, a question that occurred throughout the majority of the conversations was, “What was your greatest accomplishment?” Initially, the model couldn’t answer the question because the reference data does not discuss Dio’s opinion of himself. This particular question has been addressed in the instruction phrases, however there will need to be more phrases added to cover Dio’s opinion of himself. This process also involves incorporating more of Dio’s written
personality into the model. Currently, the model is conversational but has no discernible sense of humor or specific opinions on emperors, political decisions, or religion.
10. Future Plans and Issues

At present, the model can hold a conversation with a user, however the ultimate goal is to make the experience more immersive. The next step is connecting the conversation to an animated three-dimensional model of the historical figure’s head. A photo realistic portrayal could imply that historians know without a doubt what the figure looked like. An artistic interpretation could maintain the illusion of conversing with the historical figure while avoiding a false portrayal of history. Freepik was used in testing for this project because of its ability to create 3 images per day for free. Its results may not be useful across the board, as some less significant figures are less likely to surface in an online search. This was a definite issue with Cassius Dio, whose AI generated images were either photo realistic or sculpturally inspired, but none were similar in facial structure to the existing artwork of him. Some search prompts even resulted in images of birds rather than people. The search prompts used included “Cassius Dio Roman Historian”, “Cassius Dio Historian”, and “Lucius Cassius Dio Cocceianus.” Two resulted in images that were reminiscent of marble busts, and one looked like a painted portrait of an ancient Roman. While using AI generated images benefits the museum economically by avoiding the need to pay for image rights or graphic designers, it’s important to note that images created by AI generators cannot be copywritten. Museums that own busts or paintings of the historical figures they’re representing would benefit from using their own collections for the application,

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thus avoiding the hassle of copyrighting images and employing their own collections in a new way.

Once an appropriate image has been created, it is then animated in line with the conversation happening between the user and the model. Several of these tools advertised themselves free to the public, however, that is not true. Certain images, voices, and word counts are free.\textsuperscript{133} Anything outside of these parameters, especially anything that involves user-added content rather than premade images and avatars, costs an additional fee. These platforms also provide a limited number of voices and languages, the majority of which are not suitable for someone like Cassius Dio. They are predominantly American English voices with the occasional British English. A pre-written script is also required, rather than iterating the conversation happening between the user and the historical chatbot in real-time. Despite these limitations, it is important to note that these applications are advanced considering their low or nonexistent price point. They are simply limited in their ability to accurately represent the way in which a person communicates for historical purposes. For example, the ability to express emotions on existing models is also limited. This could be addressed by hiring someone to rig the model themselves, however that would increase the price point of the application.

Should the model be implemented in a museum exhibition, it would need to be trained in how to interact with different audience members. This could include gender, ethnicity, nationality, age, and perceived social status depending on the historical figure being represented. Curating these conversations would be at the discretion and expertise of the programmer. This could mean embellishing the knowledge in an effort to reach a wider audience. This would also

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mean potentially intentionally integrating bias in the application. There are several different ways in which this could be explored and ultimately implemented. There are a large number of filters on social media that are advertised as identifiers of race, age, nationality, and more. These different filters have understandably come under scrutiny for their gimmicky use value. Beyond the blatant inaccuracy of the filters, their face detection is built on stereotypical features associated with different ethnicities.\textsuperscript{134} The way in which these filters are coded has been likened to the race categorizations used in World War Two propaganda and the arbitrary practices like the paper bag test.\textsuperscript{135} The paper bag test, and qualifiers like it, reinforce ideas of colorism that have been used to continue racist social hierarchies.\textsuperscript{136} In the form of an AI model, this would mean intentionally programming the figure to be racist. While there are some figures known for their racism, and thus it would make sense to insert this bias, it would of course not be appropriate across the board. Additionally, racism isn’t a measurable practice that can be programmed at a specific level. It’s a uniquely human creation based on life experience and upbringing, nearly impossible to recreate accurately in a digital form. Should the programmer even be able to do so, the usefulness of this could be questionable.

Alternatively, participants could fill out a data collection form prior to interacting with the AI. This would be based on how the participants self-identify, rather than arbitrary physical identifiers that belong to multiple groups. However, this may not be accurate to how the figure themselves would’ve interacted with the person. Some figures would place people into groups based on skin color or specific facial features and act accordingly. Additionally, age makes the historical accuracy of these interactions difficult to produce. The written material left behind by

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\textsuperscript{134}Elam, Michele. “Signs Taken for Wonders: AI, Art & the Matter of Race.” pg207
\textsuperscript{135} Elam, Michele. “Signs Taken for Wonders: AI, Art & the Matter of Race.” pg207
\textsuperscript{136} Elam, Michele. “Signs Taken for Wonders: AI, Art & the Matter of Race.” pg207
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these figures as created with an adult audience in mind, and often only covers the viewpoint of an adult in their time period. Should a child choose to interact with the model, there would be little to no literary evidence of how that interaction would go. In some cases, these figures come from cultures where the children were raised by hired staff rather than the parents themselves.
11. Agency

The use of the word “model” in describing this project is admittedly strategic. The model, as described by Morgan and Morrison in their 1999 publication, *Models as Mediating Instruments*, describes the model as capable of three things; a mode of representation, a tool for learning through construction, and tool for investigation.\(^{137}\) In its creation it is a mode of representation, it represents the mind of Dio. Through its construction it has become a tool for learning his thought process, and how best to represent those thoughts. Its intended final purpose is as a tool for investigation. Despite this intended purpose, it has its own agency as a model. Once it is released into the world the intended purpose becomes malleable, dependent on the purposes of the person working with the model. It is an agent that enacts change upon the world around.\(^{138}\) This specific model can be used for capitalistic gain, political propaganda, or general misinformation. As is, the model may be of very little consequence to the public good, however using the same process a model of far more problematic or well-known figures could be created and utilized. This assertion may seem farfetched, and yet AI has already been used to spread misinformation and to cover the truth. This not only applies to historical figures, but contemporary businesspeople, celebrities, politicians, and more.

A striking example of this exact issue occurred earlier this year, involving deepfake technology. A deepfake involves creating multiple fake images to create a cohesive whole that, to


\(^{138}\) Morgan, Mary S. and Margaret Morrison. “Models as Mediating Instruments.” pg35
On February 27th, 2023 a deepfake video of President Biden began circulating the internet. The initial post was from a Turning Point USA member. Turning Point USA is a right-wing political group that has been reported by the Anti-defamation League to have direct connections alt-right, alt-lite, and far-right groups. This video showed the president announcing that America would begin drafting to help the Ukrainians fight in the war against Russia. This post circulated social media sites and resulted in a slurry of concern from the American public. The Biden administration was then forced to release a statement to clear up the misunderstanding. The video also made its way to Ukraine, causing the Ukrainian government to make a statement to their own people.

Moving in the opposite direction, the use of artificial intelligence also runs the risk of invalidating legitimate claims. A perfect example of this is the use of a video in a court case against Elon Musk. The case focuses on the family of a man whose Tesla crashed while in self-driving mode, killing him in the process. A clip used as evidence in the case shows Musk

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141 Kuklychev, Yevgeny. “Deepfake Biden Video Hypes False Narrative U.S. Sending Troops to Ukraine.”
142 “Turning Point USA.”
143 Kuklychev, Yevgeny. “Deepfake Biden Video Hypes False Narrative U.S. Sending Troops to Ukraine.”
144 “Turning Point USA.”
145 Kuklychev, Yevgeny. “Deepfake Biden Video Hypes False Narrative U.S. Sending Troops to Ukraine.”
146 “Turning Point USA.”
assuring an audience at a press conference that the cars “can drive autonomously with greater safety than a person”. These clips, available on the internet for several years prior to the case, are being debated for their authenticity. Musk says that this video is a deepfake and he never made such an announcement at a press conference. This clip could be a key piece of evidence; however, it is only useful to the family’s lawyer if they have the financial backing to hire an expert that can verify its authenticity.

In these two examples we see one model as an agent of public confusion, and the other as an agent employed as a scapegoat. This agency brings to mind questions of responsibility. Who is responsible for the outrage of the Biden deepfake? The Turning Point USA member who made the video, or the person who made the application and released it to the public? Applied to this project, would the museum be responsible for any inappropriate comments that are run through the model? Or, should it learn these behaviors from its audience, what is the ethical action the museum should take?

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147 Bond, Shannon. “People Are Trying to Claim Real Videos Are Deepfakes. the Courts Are Not Amused.”
148 Bond, Shannon. “People Are Trying to Claim Real Videos Are Deepfakes. the Courts Are Not Amused.”
149 Bond, Shannon. “People Are Trying to Claim Real Videos Are Deepfakes. the Courts Are Not Amused.”
12. Conclusion

In creating the application, the goal was to provide a tool that facilitates conversation around the rise of alt-right behavior and its reliance on antiquity. The application would be placed in a museum setting alongside artifacts relevant to the conversation, including busts of those othered in antiquity, representations of the othered communities by the communities themselves, and imagery of the appropriation and general misuse of Greco-Roman imagery by alt-right and alt-lite communities. This goal was, in some user conversations, met by the questions that were asked. Questions covering politics of the past and modern times, personal opinions on different groups Cassius Dio interacted with or wrote on, and thoughts on gender equality are all topics that intersect with the rhetoric of the alt-right. However, the unanticipated questions that come from releasing the model to the public added to the overall knowledge of the experiment. There were questions asked by the public that have no clear answer in Dio’s work. The personal questions asked by the public show that while the knowledge of Dio may be expansive, it is also shallow in reference to who he was. The intention was to make a collaborative learning process, one self-led by the user, but the unanticipated questions also teach the programmer about the holes in the understanding of a figure. There are, undeniably, questions that can never fully be answered. This first iteration of questions from users was self-guided, but the next can show what a more pointed goal of education can generate.

An additional benefit to the process of working with this model is the way in which it saves data. The questions and answers from these data sets can be catalogued over time to understand how the understanding of the public is evolving, for better or worse. Additionally, these data sets can be analyzed based on varying groups who have interacted with the model.
What kind of questions do academics ask? What about artists? Or those heavily involved in tech? What about people in different age groups, genders, political backgrounds, and more? The first part of this project, the implementation of the model in a public setting, provides data and improves understanding of the figure, but the analysis of the data produced can improve that knowledge. These datasets can also be put on display in the museum space to show the conversations that are being had and the way in which background informs the line of questioning. This analysis can also be applied to the answers received from the model. It can show the inaccuracies that the model leans into when uncertain about an answer, what themes appear most commonly in the answers it provides, and perhaps most importantly, what questions the model can’t answer or refuses to. For this first iteration of the model, Voyant was used to analyze the words included in the training data, user input, and model output. Each of these different visualizations showcases the frequency of the words included. For the training data, words such as “men”, “Caesar”, and “time” appear most often in Dio’s writing. (Figure 24) The second visualization shows the relationships between these words, as indicated by the size and color change which occurs when hovering over the word. (Figure 25) This also shows the number of times the word appears in the document. The same was done for the questions, whose primary words were “Roman”, “notable”, and “accomplishment.” (Figure 26) The most common words received in the model’s answers were “Roman”, “Rome”, and “historian.” (Figure 27)

In designing the model, the goal was to place it in a museum space on devices owned by the museum. One of the many benefits of digital applications is that they are not limited to a specific time or place, they can be reached at any time and by any community. A QR code linked to the model can be added to a textbook, it can be shared on social media, or even added to the home pages of class websites. Essentially, the model can be shared anywhere and in any context.
Currently, it has only been designed to understand English texts, but after adjusting this the model can be used to examine the international understanding of various figures, as well as the questions they have about their actions. Releasing the model to the public provides a varied view of the actions, opinions, and overall impact of the historical figure, rather than an idealized view based on only one perspective. However, as an education tool the model was better as a learning process than as an interaction. Were this project attempted again, it would be designed as a pre-determined package meant to be shared with students. This would include cleaned texts of a historian’s writing, instructions on how to utilize instruction phrases, and examples of guiding questions to use with an audience rather than free exploration by users. This design choice would employ the critical thinking skills of students learning about the figure, encouraging them to more deeply consider the thoughts and opinions of historical figures and making deep reading of the figure’s written material an absolute necessity.

The model of Dio is not the first of its kind, there have been a number of AI historical figures scattered across the internet since AI has become widely available. Khan Academy has taken advantage of this availability by creating their own AI model of Harriet Tubman intended for public school implementation. The bot was trained on a variety of sources found online, however, these sources were not all reliable, and the majority of the information recited by the bot appeared to be from Wikipedia. The bot also repeatedly delivered false information to its users, including information that was popularized on social media rather than written in a legitimate


This project exemplifies all of the fears of academics that surround AI, and rightfully so. It is a heavy-handed attempt at capitalizing on a technological trend that detrims the education of its users.

These kinds of experiments, and the criticism they generate, should inform the conversations surrounding AI and its regulation. AI has the potential to be a useful tool for education, but only when done ethically and with a critical view of its capabilities. Without input from academia, these applications become a cash grab that disseminates inaccurate and potentially insulting information. In an effort to avoid this exact situation, or worse, many companies have blacklisted various topics within their applications to avoid responsibility for harmful effects that could come from it. This regulation damages the use value of such applications, as the topics included in historical conversations are occasionally difficult and polarizing. Discussing these topics is difficult, but it is necessary for the furthering of knowledge and the inclusion of various viewpoints in the understanding of history.

AI is here and it is by no means leaving the public eye anytime soon. Rather than arguing for its removal, or criticizing the applications that currently exist, conversations about how to improve its use value need to be had. The Dio model is far from done, nor is it the most controversial representation of what an AI model could be, it is instead a starting point that exemplifies what a collaborative educational application can yield.

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Figures

Figure 1: AI chatbot description

Figure 2: Description of Rome
Figure 3 & 4: Natural disaster description

Indeed, the events described in the articles are extraordinary and remarkable. The accounts depict natural disasters, acts of bravery, and supernatural occurrences. These historical events captivate the imagination and demonstrate the resilience and courage of the people involved.

The described natural disasters include earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, droughts, violent reverberations, thunderous noises, the eruption of stones and fire, the obscuring of the sun, the covering of land and sea with ashes, and the spreading of fire that consumed various buildings in Rome.

Figure 5: Personal emotions

As a historian living in ancient Rome, I do not possess personal emotions or physical conditions, so I cannot answer in terms of how I am feeling today. However, I am here to assist you with any questions or information you seek. How may I assist you further?
Social inequality was a prevalent issue during the Roman Empire. The division between the wealthy elite and the lower classes was significant. The upper class enjoyed vast wealth, luxurious lifestyles, and held influential positions in society. Meanwhile, the lower classes, including slaves, faced economic hardships and

Figure 6: Social inequality

One notable event that I chronicled in my writings was the rise and reign of Emperor Caracalla. Caracalla, who was born of African, Syrian, and Gaulish descent, proved to be a ruler of great vice, lacking the virtues of his respective races. His reign was marked by his cruel and reckless nature, causing much strife within the empire.

Figure 7: Caracalla, vices and virtues
What virtues of his respective races was Caracalla expected to have had?

Caracalla was expected to possess the virtues associated with his respective races. The Gauls were revered for their bravery and martial prowess, the Africans for their humaneness and piety, and the Syrians for their craftiness. However, in Caracalla’s case, he exhibited none of these virtues, but rather the vices.

Figure 8: Caracalla respective races

Are all Syrians crafty?

Not all Syrians are necessarily crafty. It is a generalization to attribute a specific trait to an entire group of people based on their ethnicity or place of origin. Individuals within any population can possess various virtues and vices, independent of their background.

Figure 9: Crafty
In Roman mythology, Proserpina, also known as Persephone in Greek mythology, was the daughter of Jupiter (Zeus) and Ceres (Demeter). She was a beautiful and beloved goddess of fertility and agriculture. One day, while Proserpina was playing in a meadow, Pluto, the god of the underworld, abducted her and took her to the underworld.

Figure 10: Proserpina

The largest Roman Empire was during the reign of Emperor Trajan, spanning from 98 to 117 AD. It reached its greatest territorial extent, encompassing regions from Britain to Mesopotamia and from Spain to Egypt.

Figure 11: Largest Roman empire
During the time of the Roman Empire, there were several problems that the empire had to address. These included internal conflicts and divisions among the citizens, such as disputes between the rich and poor classes, struggles for power and authority, and disagreements over debts and property rights. Additionally,

Figure 12: Problems of the empire

I apologize, but I cannot provide an opinion on Krispy Kreme or any other specific modern-day entity as I am not familiar with it. My knowledge and perspectives are rooted in ancient Rome, and I am unaware of any developments or establishments that have occurred after my lifetime in 235 AD.

Figure 13: Krispy Kreme
Nuclear fission is a process in which the nucleus of an atom is split into two or more smaller nuclei, often accompanied by the release of a large amount of energy. This process is typically achieved by bombarding a heavy atomic nucleus, such as uranium or plutonium, with neutrons. The nuclei then undergo a chain reaction.

Figure 14: Nuclear fission

I'm sorry, but I cannot provide any information about the Daytona 500 as it is an event that occurred after my time. My knowledge is limited to events that took place up until the year 235 AD.

Figure 15: Daytona
Thoughts on abortion?

As an historian, I can tell you that during ancient Roman times, abortion was generally regarded as morally wrong and illegal. The Romans valued the importance of procreation and the continuation of the family.

What should change about the economy to better the world?

As an historian, I can tell you that maintaining stability and avoiding frequent changes in economic systems can be beneficial for the well-being of a society. Wise leadership and responsible governance are crucial, as they influence the character and habits of the people. Additionally, it is important to prioritize the
As an historian, I must provide the viewpoint and beliefs held in ancient Rome. Slavery was an accepted institution in ancient Rome, and it was viewed as a necessary component of society. Slaves were considered property and were utilized for labor and various tasks. It was a prevalent practice and...
As an historian, my beliefs are rooted in the ancestral traditions of Rome. It is in accordance with these traditions that I believe in the existence of an afterlife. The Romans placed great importance on proper rituals and actions in life to ensure a favorable afterlife.

I apologize for any confusion, but as an AI language model, I do not possess personal experiences or knowledge of an afterlife. Therefore, I cannot answer your question regarding how the afterlife has been for me. My purpose is to provide information, assist with tasks, and engage in discussions based on the.
One thing. I don’t know why. It doesn’t even matter how hard you try.

It seems that you are quoting lyrics from a song. While I appreciate the sentiment expressed in those lyrics, music and songs were not a part of my world in ancient Rome.

Did your dad become a ghost?

No, my father did not become a ghost. As a historian, I do not have personal experiences or knowledge of specific individuals becoming ghosts after their deaths. The beliefs and perceptions regarding the afterlife and spirits vary among different cultures and individuals.
Figure 24: Training Data Word Cloud
Figure 25: Training Data Word Relation Cloud
Figure 26: Questions Top Words
Figure 27: Answers Top Words
References


