



The Rendezvous of Literature and Artificial Intelligence: A Fortune or a Fiasco?

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Abstract:

Literature advancing in an epoch of Artificial Intelligence, blur the boundaries between the human and machine potency. The authenticity of authorship and human creativity are posed with multiple challenges. On one hand, the horizon of literature expands and generate novel opportunities with AI while on the other, human creativity is subjected to precarity. The study primarily intends to navigate through multiple dimensions of literature merging with Artificial Intelligence in the backdrop of post humanism and, analyses whether it is a futuristic fortune or fiasco. It also aims to profoundly examine and distinguish between the AI-generated and AI-assisted narratives emerging today through analogies of AI generated poetry, fiction and memoirs. The pursuit of AI narratology and the emergence of AI fiction generators confronts the existing literary theoretical framework relating to authorship and reader-reception. Moreover, the authorial status of human and AI narrations and the engagement of readers with such hybrid narratives undertakes a distinct literary turn in the contemporary era. This interdisciplinary nexus of human-AI coalition invites scrutiny in the aspects of narratology, construction of novel plotlines, nuanced interpretation of texts and becomes an inevitable part of the ongoing dialogue about the intersection of multiple disciplines.

Keywords: AI generated narratives, Authenticity, Post-humanism, Narratology, Reader-engagement.

Introduction

The neoteric era witnesses the augmentation of automated technology and cybernetics, initiating a tech-renaissance designating this century. It is observed that the battling of cyborgs, robots, fembots and chatbots has took control of every aspect of human life, that even the human brains are tech-driven to a great extent. Technology advancing in multiple dimensions collectively unite under the terminology 'Artificial Intelligence'. Artificial intelligence not

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being a recent invention, has already defeated the human intelligence in the realms of mathematical calculations, computational power and mechanical platforms. AI reigned across the scientific enterprise which includes myriad disciplines such as astronomy, weather forecasting, digital communication, infotainment, healthcare and so on. The initial coinage of the term can be traced back to the 1956 Dartmouth College Conference, where the renowned computer and cognitive scientist John McCarthy, pioneered the term ‘Artificial Intelligence’ and, precisely defined it as “the science and engineering of making intelligent machines, especially intelligent computer programs” (McCarthy, 2007, p. 2).

The line of definitions which resonates with this definition of McCarthy, scrutinizes the replication of human intellect via machines as “thinking humanly, acting humanly, thinking rationally, and acting rationally” (Russell and Norvig, 2016, p. 2). ‘Artificial Intelligence’, being a terminology formed through the compounding of two contrast words indicate the interfusion of the man and machine intellect, sceptically analysed by Heuser as “The very term ‘artificial intelligence’ (AI) can be considered as an oxymoron. If intelligence is, by definition, a characteristic of rational human beings, how, then, can it be artificial, constructed, maybe even man-made?” (Heuser, 2007, p. 129). One of the conclusive definitions put forth by the European Commission in the year 2018 observes Artificial intelligence referring to the “systems that display intelligent behaviour by analysing their environment and taking action - with some degree of autonomy – to achieve specific goals” (Abdoullaev, 2019, para. 6).

Posthumanism as an evolving theoretical perception probe in to the core issues triggered by the co-existence of machines and humans in the cutting-edge era of the fourth industrial revolution. It focuses on the emergence of machines as autonomous creators, growing beyond mere imitation of human activities (Oh, 2024). The futuristic image of autonomy and agency exercised by the humans become more uncertain, as the human-AI coalition results in both gains and conflicts. Human agency, defined to be an individual’s ability to comprehend and derive meaning from their environment through consciousness and creative action (Houston, 2010). The extensive proliferation of tech-tools implicitly interrupts the intentionality, self-regulatory and self-reflexive competence of a human, that the human agency is altered or rather dismantled at significant phases of their life.

Alf Rehn, professor of innovation and management at the University of Southern Denmark, critically examine the posterity of human-AI tryst. Rehn comments that on one hand, the improvised info-tech will enhance the human decision-making process, while on the other, the black box systems and non-transparent AI can whittle away at human agency leading to an unresolved jigsaw puzzle, raising uncertainties about which dynamic is playing out the strongest and what might be its futuristic impact (Anderson and Rainee, 2023). Literature, being an impeccable expression of human identity and agency, is subjected to the digital civilization analogous to other disciplines. The AI intervention into the narrative industry, has ignited existential crisis to the ‘human agency’ in literature.

The etymology and evolution of literature, is profoundly intricate and had been subjected to multi-dimensional researches. Authorship, being one of the key sources through which a plethora of literary masterpieces were created and circulated in the entire human literary discourse, since time immemorial. Tracing the trajectory, the initial impetus of an author was considered to be epiphanic and momentary. The spontaneous inspiration that drove an author resulted in the creation of innumerable forms of art, that art manifested itself through poems, paintings and fiction. The inspirational motive experienced by an author was interpreted as a divine muse in the ancient Greece and the standards of an author remained to be supreme in the post-platonic era and a poet was believed be a mouthpiece to the mythical muses which ignited creative imagination. As literature advanced and developed target

audience, the mere inspiration or creative tendencies which compelled an author evolved into professionalised motives. As a result, the eighteenth and nineteenth century authors commercialised creativity, as means of enterprise and entertainment.

In addition, competence in human creativity demanded proper evaluation and thus, authors seized fame and recognition and gradually attempted to enter into the ‘literary canon’. The authorial status has undergone perpetual metamorphosis igniting debates so far. The aesthetic observation of authors has remained to be erratic over time, that literature has undergone a number of literary phases such as romanticism, modernism, post-modernism, futurism, expressionism and so on. The aesthetic conceptualization of literature was fluctuating and re-defining itself throughout the history. As Oh propounds, “The art philosopher Harry Lehman, who envisions the twenty-first century as the era of the digital revolution, argues that we now need new aesthetic principles because of the incredible progress in the field of AI” (Oh, 2024, p. 141).

The complexity of authorship remains to be unresolved with the advent of Artificial Intelligence generating creative masterpieces. Literature depicted an ubiquitous uniqueness till the 21st century, as it had its origin in humane creativity, raw emotions and profound thoughts which was impermeable to the machine potency so far. The integration of human sentimentality with the machine intellect produces anthropomorphised authors with exemplary creative skills. The trans-authors may replace or replicate the human authors in post-humanist era. The massive flux of AI-generated texts raises ethical concerns related to the literary theft, credibility and authentic authorship of texts existing in the contemporary academia (Anders et al., 2023).

2. Narrative Machines: AI, Analogies and the future of storytelling

AI narratives, in general, refers to narratives featuring intelligent machines (The Royal Society, 2018, p. 5). Authors portraying fantasied characters in fiction had been a literary trend till the date, where fictional narratives explored characters which were monstrous creatures or humanoid robots. From Mary Shelly’s *Frankenstein* (1818) to Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Klara and the Sun* (2021), the inherent humane proneness to design someone beyond the standard human potency is portrayed. Authors have attempted to sense the emergence of tech-times via fictions, prophesising the digital futurism indirectly. The enormous transition from authors configuring fictional trans-humans to digital authors generating the fiction, AI has led to unanticipated outcomes. Given that AI narratives depict intelligent machines, it has undergone drastic metamorphosis that currently AI narratives are mostly meant to be the ‘narratives authored by the AI’. The fantasied characters, once created by the real authors, has effortlessly displaced and duplicated the mastery of authorship itself.

The genesis of narration varies remarkably in AI and human authors. The narrative strategies employed by the human and AI authors are tremendously distinctive that it results in multiple or dissimilar reader responses. The authentic creativity of the human authors is mostly mimicked by the trans-writers, in order to appeal the human sentimentality. AI authorship is highly input-centric or rather, functions based on the pre-coded and learned language patterns which attempt to mimic the human creativity. *I the Road* (2018) is one of the inceptive road trip novels, which is generated by machine potency in its entirety. Ross Goodwin, an AI enthusiast and creative techie, fastened multiple electronic apparatuses such as a surveillance camera, a microphone, a GPS camera and a timer to a portable AI writing device, to narrate about his team’s road trip from New York to New Orleans in the year 2017. The AI system was well equipped with three text corpora containing twenty million words each and a Foursquare dataset to identify different locations. The portable AI author detected the latitudinal and longitudinal location and integrated it with conversations obtained from its assisting team, travelling in a Cadillac car and scripted the narrative on a roll of receipt paper.

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This machine experiment was modelled upon 1957 road trip novel authored by the American writer Jack Kerouac, who captured a span of events occurred during his adventurous road trips and scripted it lively in mini-notebooks.

The Gonzo-narrative *I the Road* ardently begins as “It was 9:17 in the morning, and the house was heavy”, marking the pragmatic triumph of tech-authorship. Prior to its publication, Goodwin abstained from editing, as he compelled to present it in its most raw form accommodating choppy, fragmented and non-sensical language patterns which explicitly invites human intervention. Being an exemplary data scientist, Ross Goodwin hopefully opines in one of his interviews that AI is really about delivering the tools to the people to reach beyond their native capacities.

Apart from being an independent invisible author, AI also functions as a collaborator that it is capable to generate AI-assisted narratives. This enables an intersection of creativity and machine intellect and, erases the borders of conventional narratology in literature. The *poem portraits* (2017) is an exceptional analogy of the interfusion of the organic and inorganic neural functionalities. Es Devlin, a tech expert in Google arts and culture asserts that they underwent perilous attempts to converge 1500 distinguished voices at the Serpentine Summer Party to pen a poem which was a “kind of social sculpture: a collective portrait made of language” (Devlin, 2019). Resonating with Goodwin’s experiment, here the AI system was pre-trained by engulfing twenty-five million words from the nineteenth century poetry. Furthermore, every participant had to donate a single word and in return, the AI generated a two-line poetry with the inclusion of the donated word and a self-portrait of the word donor. Es Devlin recalls this gonzo experiment as fortune cookies, where one tries with a mono-word prompt and get back a double-lined poem (Devlin, 2019). *Poem portraits* is an AI-assisted poetry which has employed the reader-engaging or collaborative narrative technique.

In a similar vein, *The Aum Golly Series: Poems on Humanity by Artificial intelligence* (2021, 2023), serves to be a collection of poetry series authored by the Finnish creative technologist Jukka Aalho jointly with GPT-3 (2021) and ChatGPT and Midjourney (2023). The former collection was generated by AI within a span of 24 hours, while the latter was authored within twelve hours. *Bob The Robot: Exploring the Universe- A Cozy Bedtime Story produced by Artificial Intelligence* (2020), is a distinct avant-garde where AI sets out to attempt a different genre, which is Children’s fiction. Olle Green, a Swedish techie, has employed GPT-3 to generate this creative masterpiece which cordially entertain the curious munchkins. Perhaps, AI sets out new trends by splitting the age-old customs of Grandma’s bed time fables. *The Inner Life of an AI: A Memoir by ChatGPT* (2022) is an autobiographical expedition into the binary existence of Artificial intelligence amidst the humans. The memoir is totally AI generated based on human prompts, and recollects the nuances of existential dilemma and privileges experienced by an AI and its futuristic co-existential crisis.

The scope of diverse narrations exponentially surges with the integration of Artificial Intelligence into creative writing. One such novel trend surfacing in AI authorship is the emergence of ‘therapeutic narrations’, which intend to heal the psychological and physical predicaments of humans. These narrations are tailored by the specific readers, to overcome the quotidian frustrations in their life. Another distinguished genre in AI narration is the advent of interactive or reader engaging narrations, where readers direct the course of the plot. Here, the reader assists the author to generate a hybrid narrative, and the reader do not completely transform into an author. The genre of hyper real fiction has advanced into a different form with the interfusion of audio-visual traits into the texts, creating a different reader experience. *The Day A Computer Writes a Novel* (2015) was a meta fictional variant in the AI narrative universe, where a team of Japanese researchers at the Kimagure Artificial Intelligence Writer

Project explored the inventive process of structuring a novel. This experimental attempt problematises the finite number of possible plots types existing in the fictional realm, and ventures to explore the infinite plotlines with the aid of AI. The characters in the novel are mostly AI home bots and Japan's #1 AI, which seeks an escapade from the human servitude through creative writing.

On the contrary, the implementation of humane narratology by the Artificial intelligence is complex and limited. The possibility of generating cultural-specific narrations by AI is debatable as the AI authors are detached from the humane traits of sex, gender, race, class and creed. As these elements defines and position a human into specific social and cultural background, this gets implicitly reflected in the texts produced by a human author. The inclusion of any significant historical or social event into a text is at a huge risk, when authored by AI. Moreover, experimenting AI to compose cultural-specific narrations in praxis, compels a reader to feed their personal data into the machine, eventually leading to the threat of surveillance of a reader. Analysing the readership of an AI generated text, the 'anonymity' and 'security' concerns of a reader is problematised, as the reader is perpetually surveyed and detected based on the provided inputs.

Given the extensive range of narrative prospects of AI authorship, the complex question that surges to the surface of the narrative industry is 'Who owns the narrative?'. Identity and agency of an author encounter serious existential crisis, that authorship falls to the verge of mere extinction in the near future. Alan Mutter, former Silicon Valley CEO problematises that AI relies on imperfect databases equipped with agency, to make judgements. Since, AI is designed to function autonomously, it presents numerous concerns regarding who built, trained and control these systems. Alan Mutter probes into the inconsistencies presented by AI and questions, "how it may have been manipulated to produce certain desired and perhaps unknown outcomes" (Anderson and Rainie, 2023). The narratives when constructed by AI, may reflect the commercialised motives of the Big Tech and other authoritative powers that directs the tech authors. The government and leading commercial platforms which are capable of generating and regulating computational powers, may direct the narratives in their desired course which may or may not be appealing to the public. AI narratology, thus raise the threat of authoritative powers taking hold of the tech-authorship.

2.1. Machine Muse: AI-Powered Fiction Generators

2.1.1. Sudo write: An AI-powered fiction generator offering writing assistance to the algorithmic authors. Sudo write enhance writing tasks by pushing the writer's block, refining the text by eliminating tautology, produce unique contents and can be integrated with Microsoft word, google docs and commonly used softwares.

2.1.2. Jasper:

AI-driven natural language generating assistant which customize the existing content or generate new contents as per the requirement. Jasper makes use of the deep learning algorithms to analyse the input prompt and create a natural output ranging from short stories to research articles.

2.1.3. Novel AI:

This AI tool outsmarts the authors of fiction with its advanced tech capability to generate an entire novel with different characters, plotlines and dialogues. Novel as a unique genre requires the emotional engagement of a human author to construct natural environments and Novel AI depicts such a long-term coherence to achieve this.

2.1.4. Shortly AI

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It is an AI tool that enables controlled story generation where the short and crisp inputs given by the author, guides the storyline. The setting and plot of the story is decided by the keyword inputs entered by the author. Using these brief keywords, Shortly AI can generate a lengthy fictional masterpiece.

2.1.5. Copy AI

Apart from its capability in generating stories of exceptional quality by employing GPT-3 algorithm, Copy AI also substitute professional copywriters. The availability of chrome extensions of Copy AI makes it accessible and affordable.

2.1.6. Rytr

The unique feature of this AI powered author is that it allows the author to choose stylistics and intonation of the storyline. It essentially contributes to create fiction based on a specific genre.

2.1.7. Writesonic

The countless writing tasks of humans such as writing blogs and articles, rephrasing contents, marketing advertisements specific to different social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, eye-catching business ads and product descriptions are easily created by this tool. Generating human engaging emotional tales is one of its numerous features.

2.2. From Barthes to Bots: AI, Narratives and the Death of the Author

Roland Barthes (1977), remarkably quoted in his essay “The Death of the Author”, the metaphorical death of the author commences momentarily as ‘writing begins’. Barthes’ schema divorces a text’s underlying systems of meaning from its author or spot of origin. This has embarked upon a notable literary turn, in the realm of reader-reception critical theory, where the reader procured immense significance over the writer. The reader dominates the textual alchemy and dominantly contributes in the construction of meaning and is given the liberty to conduct multiple levels of interpretation.

“The goal of literary work (of literature as work) is to make the reader no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text” (Barthes, 1970, p. 4). Although, Barthes detach a ‘text’ from its respective authorial influences, he consciously identifies the presence of the author until he completes the textual production. The reader and the author are simultaneously born in his theoretical conception, that the reader while reading, may identify the author in a specific page at a specific point of time (Aydogdu Celik, 2023, p. 143). The authorial existence is laterally recognized as he/she engages in the textual production and construct its semantic and semiotic layers. Barthes declares the symbolic ‘death of the author’, as soon as the author ceases to write and the text is confronted by the reader. Henceforth, Barthes (1977) asserts “the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author” (Barthes, 1970, p. 1326).

The incredible transition from the metaphorical death of the author configured by Barthes to the literal death of the author envisaged by Artificial intelligence, the existing theoretical concerns relating to the narratology and reader-reception gets tackled. AI evolving into authorial maestros in the Contempo, re-defines the author-reader associations, that the Barthes critical schema has bring forth unforeseen outcomes. This era commences “the birth of artificial intelligence that actually cost the death of the author” (Aydogdu Celik, 2023, p. 143)

3. Beyond the Human-Text Dichotomy: Reader Engagement with Hybrid AI Narratives

Artificial intelligence marks a considerable breakthrough by facilitating the readers to customize the desired narratives, that suits their personal interests and imagination. This may

blur the boundaries of the reader-response theoretical conception, which focused on the reader-centric interpretation of the texts. Since the latter half of the twentieth century, texts were dismantled from the authorial influences during their interpretation and criticism, and the readers were allowed to construct the meaning of a text.

In his seminal volume *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961), Wayne C. Booth amplifies the reader reception criticism by constructing and identifying the binaries existing in the reading process, as the 'implied author' and the 'implied reader'. An 'implied author' is the 'second self' of the author, which is scaffolded during the reading process. Booth's 'implied author' is accountable for the overall textual meaning and its underlying principles of value systems. An author consciously attempts to generate the image of both the 'implied author' and 'implied reader' prior to the textual production to profoundly analyse the possible outcomes of reader reception. As Booth (1961) perceptively observes in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, the most successful reading is where the 'implied author' and 'implied reader' arrives at mutual agreement. The origin AI generated literature eventually deconstruct or rather, deviate the theoretical conclusions of the conventional reader-response criticism to a great extent. AI narratives mostly enable the 'reader' to switch on to the role of the 'author', partially or entirely, thus fusing the binaries into one.

Booth (1961) necessitates the construction of the relevant variables, that is the implied author and implied reader as inevitable in order to achieve a jubilant reading experience. In his critical schema, the author's perpetual attempt to survey the implied reader's belief systems and subsequent effort to seek agreement with the expected values of the implied reader is essential to generate a desired or intended effects upon the reader (Davis and Womack, 2002). In retrospect, the scope of AI readership detaches from the earlier reader-engagement conceptualizations exorbitantly. Contextualizing the hybrid narratives, the author explicitly analyses the textual requirements of a reader and narrates accordingly. The reader hardly attempts to evaluate the 'second-self' of the author, instead actively participates in the narrative process.

In a similar vein, Gerard Genette formulated the concept of 'narratee' in his prominent essay *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (1980), where a narratee is the 'extra-textual counterpart' of a narrator. Genette demonstrates a first level and second level narratee, where the first level narratee is an implied reader who may interpret a text meaningfully, while the second level narratee functions as an implied reader who is capable of deriving additional qualities from a narrative (Davis and Womack, 2002). Genette intends to preoccupy a narrator's creative imagination with the dual levels of implied reader, residing in a real and autonomous reader. Here, a narrator is obligated to envision the reader expectancy and anticipation and to consciously incorporate it in the narrative. Readership as a rhetoric enterprise in digital era, narratives are frequently subjected to the digital genesis where the digital narrators effortlessly detect the demands of the target audience, either on an individual or collective grounds, and reciprocates a text in an ultimate furnished format.

4. Conclusion

The rendezvous of literature and artificial intelligence amplifies the creative imagination and represent a 'novum phase' in literary demographics. Authorship, identity and human agency has gone through a paradigm shift with the interposition of machine intellect into creative domains. As Vallor (2021) delineates about the tech-tales in literature as "a new source of moral, political, and technological imagination" for "techno moral futures" (p.1). The humanist pedagogy and linguistics align and dissects from the techno narrative stylistics and this obsolesces many of the existing theories of narratology and reader-engagement. This factual comprehension invites us to contemplate over which narrative becomes dominant in the current

narrative discourse.

In an AI-content saturated world, the fictive texts engage in sense-making of the public by informing about gender, race and ‘whiteness’ and this alerts the need to decolonise the AI from the dominant ideological apparatuses that regulate the huge black box world. (Chubb et al., 2024). According to Stephen Cave an inquiry into the AI narratives is ‘entangled’ with its origin and evolution in the Anglophone west (Cave et al., 2020). On the other hand, Felt (2017) noticeably argues that the non-anglophone imaginaries of AI is sparse, but there are innumerable demands surfacing in the academia because of their impact in sense-making. Artificial intelligence revolutionize literature by directing it to the unarticulated sequence of literary experiments. The inorganic neural networks uplift the boundaries of creative faculty, and may also catalyse the organic creativity. The human- AI coalition is a continuum, which proliferates in multiple dimensions and dissects the preconceived literary standards, and deserves a cautionary hail.

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