

Ai Generated Narratives and Literary Canon Formation

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has evolved from being a futuristic concept to an integral part of our everyday lives. Each and every aspect of our lives is now governed by AI from education and health care to virtual assistants like Alexa and Siri. Literature has not been able to do away with the profound involvement of artificial intelligence in it. This intersection of literature and artificial intelligence has brought about certain changes in the way we create, perceive and consume literary texts. This paper deals with the idea of the evolution of traditional literary canon and narratives due to the greater involvement of artificial intelligence. It also aims to dive into the concept of the traditional literary canon and how has it been challenged by the new age technological literature overpowered by artificial intelligence. Alongside this brief comparison, the research tries to analyze the possible “Evolved Narratives” that might become the standard in the near future altering the conventional style of literature increasing the dependence on the artificial intelligence systems wherein humans take a backseat giving the steering wheel to AI bots giving them the agency the change and manipulate the narratives.

Keywords: involvement of AI, intersection, challenges, literary canon, evolved narratives.

Introduction

21st century is a time period dominated by various technological advancements like block chain technology, electric-powered cars, quantum computing and most importantly artificial intelligence. AI has become one of the major transformative forces influencing almost every aspect of human life. It is now playing a major role in the way we live, work and interacts with each other. Healthcare, education, automated vehicles, entertainment, finance, security and surveillance, there is absolutely no realm of human existence that has remained untouched or unaffected by AI.

The new age concept of ‘Machine Learning’ has a profound impact on education. It has transformed the entire landscape of education offering innovative tools and solutions to enhance learning. To be more precise if we talk about the influence of AI on literature we can drive the conclusion that literature and AI are largely intertwined in the modern times. The advanced algorithms and language processing has brought about certain unconventional yet significant changes in the way we create, consume and perceive literary texts. These changing patterns have not only modified the traditional style of literature but have also raised some major concerns about the authorship, creativity and modification of the conventional literary canon. Most importantly it raises a question on the essence of human expression in literary works considering the fact that literature has always been considered to be representing the soul of the writer. For the longest time in the history writing was considered to be cathartic but with the greater dependency on AI this idea has now become contentious.

The use of AI is not just limited to writing rather it has also become a catalyst for new forms of narratives pushing the boundaries of the traditional literary forms.

Analysis

History of Literary Canon

The history of literary canon is deeply intertwined with cultural, social and political developments over the years. This process of canonization is therefore not static and reflects the power structure and ideologies of different eras. It can be traced back to the ancient civilizations where certain works like Homer's *Iliad and Odyssey* became the foundation texts for the western world. Later literary figures like Aristotle shaped the classical literature. After the ancient and classical beginning of the literary canon next in line was the religious influence that prevailed during the medieval period where Church figures like Augustine and Jerome came into prominence along with various Christian texts and religious writings. It was during the same time that Beowulf became a part of the canon. After this came the Renaissance which marked the revival of classical texts along with humanist ideals followed by Enlightenment and the rise of Secularism where the works of the writers like John Locke and Samuel Johnson became a part of the literary canon. While where on one hand 19th century saw the rise of Romanticism focusing on emotions, nature and the individual, 20th century brought about significant changes in both literature and society giving birth to new forms of writing like stream of consciousness. Postmodernism in the late 20th century challenged the idea of a stable and a unified literary canon and the process of canonization became more democratized. Then came the era of the rise in digital technology, The 21st Century also known as the Digital age. This time period is overpowered by AI-generated texts that have further complicated the traditional ideas of the literary canon. Internet has changed the course of literature including the way we create, understand and access it. People sharing common literary interests have formed communities on various online platforms widening the scope of literature. Internet has also increased intertextuality in literature redefining and taking it onto the new levels of creativity. E-books have become a part of the pop culture. Now-a-days people have started writing an entire book online on applications like Kindle, Wattpad, and Goodreads etc. All this has introduced the terms like Bookstagram, Booktok etc.

Sven Birkets in "*The Gutenberg Elegies*" predicted that the printed books would rapidly decline and become merely a part of a 'vestigial order' taking with it not just our sense of historical depth and continuity but our very selves as selfhood gets distributed into limitless, random- access networks.

Due to the growing influence of global literature, the canon is no longer dominated by the west.

21st Century Literature before AI

Impact of AI on Literary Canon

There is no debate about the fact that impact of AI on literature is multifaceted. The involvement of AI in the literature has assisted the writers in some forms including the scanning of manuscripts for errors reducing the time needed for revisions. This modern technology can also translate works of literature into various languages breaking down the language barrier and enabling personalized reading.

Though it is one thing to assist the writer while a whole another to actually create a piece of work from scratch using formulas and algorithms. This concept leads to the lack of emotional depth and the originality in the literary texts. Not only it might create a shallow content but also takes away the jobs of human writers, editors, translators etc. It has also enabled experimentation leading to the existence of a

broader range of voices in literature. It has also lowered the bar for entry of the writers and has also led to the production of the narratives that might not fit within the traditional literary forms. Though this collaborative activity of the writers along with AI tools can push the boundaries of what literature is and what it can be but this might also result in the flood of content that might lead to the loss to the human/writer's voice in the generated texts and it will be overshadowed by the formulaic and algorithmic writings. One of the major problems with using AI for generating literary texts and letting it seep into the conventional literary canon would be that if a writer decides to not use AI or take any sort of help from it the applications or website; it impacts the quality of one's output. Almost everyone is incorporating AI into their tasks and as a result those who do not use it may find their work falling behind. Work that lacks AI integration is often seen as less efficient and less competent compared to that of others who embrace these tools.

POSSIBLE NARRATIVES

The incorporation of AI in literature opens several new narrative possibilities. Some of them can be:

AI AS THE PROTAGONIST OR THE NARRATOR

The first possibility could be that AI could take itself as the protagonist or the narrator exploring its consciousness, self-awareness or the ethical dilemmas it faces. It might also try to deal with its own identity, purpose and all its interactions with human beings. All this can give rise to plotlines ranging from AI seeking freedom to AI questioning its creators.

THE DYSTOPIAN FUTURE

Although a lot of writers have explored the dystopian future with AI in their works but the rapid evolution of artificial intelligence opens up many subplots where AI itself takes charge becoming a tool for surveillance, oppression or control. These stories might depict the collapse of the entire human civilization due to its excessive reliance on AI systems.

AI AS A MIRROR TO HUMANITY

The narratives might revolve around the reflection of the best and worst qualities of humanity, be it cruelty or creativity, love or betrayal. It will become a means for human to confront their own identity.

POST-HUMANISM AND TRANSHUMANISM

There is a high possibility that this narrative by AI could portray human's transition beyond the biological human limit. The stories could revolve around how humans evolve merging with artificial intelligence and become trans-human –half human and half machine. There is a possibility that it would question the very “existence” of human beings and talking about what exactly is the meaning of being “Alive”.

THE BLENDING OF LITEARY GENRES

Artificial intelligence has the ability to blend the various literary genres and give rise to the hybrid form of storytelling. It can lead to the change in the plot according to the will and the interest of the reader. There can be infinite variations of a single plotline.

LANGUAGE VARIATION AND COMMUNICATION

AI has started to understand human language and it might also be able to give rise to a new form of communication by creating a language that can only be comprehended by the AI systems. This could also lead to stories about the loss of human linguistic identity or the introduction of a new hybrid language challenging the conventional ways of thinking.

CONCLUSION

The intersection of artificial intelligence and literary creation represents a profound shift in how narratives are produced, consumed, and evaluated within the context of the literary canon. As AI technologies increasingly contribute to narrative construction, they challenge traditional notions of authorship, originality, and the very process by which texts gain recognition and permanence within the literary canon. The ability of AI systems to generate compelling stories, characters, and plots complicates the traditional role of human writers in the literary landscape, while simultaneously democratizing narrative creation and offering new avenues for exploration. However, the integration of AI-generated narratives into the literary canon raises important questions regarding authorship, authenticity, and the criteria for literary merit. Can a machine's output, regardless of its complexity and emotional depth, truly be considered literature? And if so, how will these narratives be valued in relation to those produced by human authors? The future of the literary canon may need to expand its parameters to include works born from AI, but this requires careful consideration of how these texts are curated, analyzed, and critiqued within the wider cultural and historical contexts. Ultimately, the influence of AI on literary canon formation is still in its early stages. While AI-generated narratives are reshaping the boundaries of creativity, they also serve as a tool for furthering human understanding of narrative structures, literary form, and storytelling. The dialogue between technology and tradition will continue to evolve, and it remains to be seen how AI will not only influence the creation of literary works but also redefine the nature of what constitutes the literary canon itself.

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