

News/Current Affairs Summary – The Impact of AI On Creative Writing

By Amy Perry - 2400613

The topic of using Artificial Intelligence in creative writing is controversial, flooding the media in recent years with headlines such as *“It could go quite wrong”: ChatGPT inventor Sam Altman admits A.I. could cause 'significant harm to the world' as he testifies in front of Congress”* (Liberatore, 2023). With rapid advancements of modern technology giving rise to assistive technologies such as grammar assistance programmes and content creation, it has expanded accessibility to the art of writing in a way that is unprecedented. However, the use of AI also poses lingering questions. In a world where a cohesive piece of writing can be generated at the touch of a button, is the work of a writer redundant? And, in the case of recurring scandals regarding intellectual property, how much of that work is original? Indeed, creative writers are left concerned with what the future holds for their discipline.

That is not to say all uses of AI within the sphere of creative writing is negative. For many people with specific learning needs, AI is a lifesaver that has opened the world of writing to people who previously found it inaccessible. From speech recognition software, allowing one to dictate their thoughts directly, to spelling and grammar assistants, the list of assistive programmes is ever expanding. The British Dyslexia Association (2024) itself states that the progress of AI has been growing at an astounding rate and that “...there are products now that can be life changing for users.”

Writer's block is an issue many writers contend with over their careers – whether struggling to create new ideas or becoming stuck over wording. AI programmes such as *‘Idea Generator’* (Hutter, 2024) are there to help, allowing writers to focus purely on their project. AI systems use survey information and data in such a way that it can help create content that is indistinguishable to that written by humans, opening a realm of opportunities for writers to focus upon projects they can focus all their energy and enthusiasm into while AI takes care of the rest.

There is, however, fear amongst creative writers and artists that they will be replaced by machines - a dystopian future the likes of which we have only seen in science fiction tales such as *Brave New World* (Huxley, 1932). Though it is true there have been darker aspects surrounding the surge in AI, such as infringement and authorship cases, it has also been a force for good. In their article for the Harvard Business Review, Daniel De Cremer *et al.* (2023) states, “AI will support humans to do the work they already perform, but simply allowing them to do it with greater speed and efficiency.”

Certainly, efficiency in the workplace has been the ongoing battle of managers the world over. With people realising the health and social benefits of a sustainable work/life balance, AI

has become an integral support; from inspiring the novelist slaving over their latest book, to correcting the phrasing of journalists frantically attempting to reach their deadlines.

This approach to creative writing has been applied within varying sectors, streamlining the way writers tackle projects. Necessary, yet tedious, processes such as paperwork completion can be breezed through, leaving more time for content creation.

Producing original, high-quality work consistently is not easy and can lead to burnout. AI supplements this, making output effortless, yet still the writer's own work. Goswami (2024) states, "The idea is to make the job easier and faster for human writers." On the other hand, the efficiency of work produced by AI raises the question of morality, and the loss of the human voice. With human writers feeling that their work is no longer valid and leaving the sphere of creative writing entirely, the records and experiences of living people reporting what it means to be authentically human will be replaced with unfeeling codes mashed together by a machine, misconstruing and even erasing the voice of the people. Appel *et al.* (2023) suggests "With AI's rise come questions about originality and authenticity."

Even renowned creative writing companies such as NaNoWriMo are not exempt from the temptations of AI, with the rhetoric that condemning the technology suggests one is classist and/or ableist. NaNoWriMo (2024a) writes that "The categorical condemnation of artificial intelligence has classist and ableist undertones."

This statement alienated writers, who felt they were being accused of bigotry, when all they wanted was to ensure the integrity of their work. One writer - Maureen Johnson - a bestselling author of children's novels, asked to be removed from NaNoWriMo's writer's board regarding their new policy on AI, saying:

I want nothing to do with your organization from this point forward. I would also encourage writers to beware--your work on their platform is almost certainly going to be used to train AI.
(Johnson, 2024)

After backlash from writers, NaNoWriMo (2024b) updated their original statement, posting a note to the community, "Taking a position of neutrality was not an abandonment of writers' legitimate concerns about AI."

It seems despite their attempts at damage control, the voice of a beloved author condemning NaNoWriMo left fellow writers rightfully cautious of AI and the once-exalted organisation. With trust in such organisations shattered, it makes it almost impossible for creative writers to confidently publish their work without concerns that they will be taken advantage of, and their intellectual property stolen and intermingled with other people's work.

Of course, the narrative of different companies and news outlets is distorted to accommodate their audience. It is no surprise that companies such as NaNoWriMo, who rely on the engagement of the public, would advocate for the use of AI if it supports people in accessing their content.

In conclusion, despite the ever-present negative headlines, there are benefits to the use of AI within creative writing, however monitoring this, lest it take away from the human creativity in full, is a must. A compromise would be the way forward. With assistive technology supporting the creative writer in their craft, and the intellectual property of the writer being fully acknowledged and protected.

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