

10/6/23: STYLE IN THE HARD LIGHT OF ALGORITHM

The mathematization of what we have until now called by the vague honorific “creativity” is becoming more attended to every day, in nearly every social domain, almost everywhere in the world. Inevitably, each writer is having thoughts about ways their personal artistic signature and their overall approach to authorial status will need to respond to AI. Share yours.

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What do YOU think? Do you intend to use AI? Are you already using it? Do you think writers in different parts of the world might have different reasons for using or not using AI? AI can provide real-time writing assistance, suggesting improvements in grammar, style, and vocabulary. It has the ability to highlight potential mistakes or suggest alternative phrases for a perfect job. AI can generate content based on certain prompts or guidelines. For example, it can create product descriptions, blog posts, or social media updates. AI productivity apps can provide features like task scheduling, reminders, and progress tracking, assisting writers in meeting deadlines and maintaining a consistent writing routine. Its proofreading tools can analyze the structure, grammar, and readability of a piece of writing.

Writing comes always with a purpose, even when it is a hobby. In fact, purposeful writing is more effective because it is only with purpose that a message can be conveyed clearly. Some people naturally have this strong urge to write and they cannot get over it unless they have transferred their thoughts to a paper. It can be thought of as a drive to convey.

There are many reasons why people write. To express themselves, for financial gain, to reflect and to let it all out, to be recognized in society and have some fame, to let imagination flow and to share our insides and experiences with the world. People write to live and live to write. We write to be fully alive. Carl Sagan says “... writing is perhaps the greatest human invention binding together people, citizens of distant epochs, who never knew one another. Books break the shackles of time, proof that humans can work magic.” If there is one thing that unites famous writers, it is their passion. It is essence, existence; it is the breath of life.

AI has the potential to disrupt passionate souls in their writing process and by extension the very role of the writer in society. AI generated content could easily become the norm, leading to the fall in the demand for writers as a whole. This is part of the reason why writers in Hollywood have been on strike.

But while they were busy protesting: AI was busy doing their jobs for them. An example of AI-generated writing is “The Day a Computer Writes a Novel,” a short story written by a Japanese AI program called Hikaru-Ai. The story was entered into a literary competition in Japan and received high marks from the judges, who praised its structure, plot, and character development. *Sunspring*, a short film written entirely by an AI program called Benjamin, was created as part of a competition, and received widespread attention for its surreal and disjointed narrative. It was praised for its experimental approach to storytelling and its willingness to push

the boundaries of creative filmmaking.

Chaos obtains when a footballer with no writing skills suddenly becomes a writing guru, generating fifteen poems in five minutes, while true creatives like Soonest, Busi, Kotomi, Ali, Iya, Reetta, Senka, and all IWP writers are devalued, because the former now possess an AI tool in a writing device.

It is catastrophic when deep recognition is not part of the deal, when essence fades and when hope is squashed and dreams bleak. When no one possesses the right to his style because AI now suggests the hard work of the writer along with his signature style should be passed on to the general public. When books are void of a soul, of consciousness, of self-awareness and all the naturalness thereof. When courts are flooded with the programmer who wrote the AI algorithm, the company that owns the algorithm and the end user who puts the algorithm to work, on who has ownership of a content.

Can AI replace brilliant and gifted writers? I ask you: Does AI witness genocide? Does it have the ability to sit by the fireplace listening to new old stories pouring out of a grandmother's mouth? No, it only feeds from the publications that have been made already, and which can be intentionally dulled by introducing gibberish into the system. The big question is, will writers survive? Will there be any future need for our prestigious IWP and for many other writing programs across the globe in the upcoming years?

Certain institutions have put up enormous resistance to AI. 17 authors, including John Grisham, Jonathan Franzen, and George R.R. Martin, filed a lawsuit against OpenAI alleging "the systematic theft on a massive scale" of their copyrighted books. As of September 27, 2023, the Writers Guild of America reached an agreement with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP), representing major television and film production companies, which requires studios to disclose to writers if any material given them has been generated by AI, partially or in full. AI cannot be a credited writer. AI generated writing cannot be source material. Agreement-covered material can't be used to train AI. Any written material produced by traditional AI cannot be considered literary material.

David Gunkel, author of *Person, Thing, Robot* says, "This [the legal agreement] is the first step on a long process of negotiating and working through what generative AI means for the creative industry - not just writers but visual artists, actors, you name it." Actors, on strike since July 14, are likewise seeking better compensation from streaming. But they are also demanding safeguards against AI, which can potentially use a star's likeness without his or her permission, or replace background actors entirely. Attempts to adopt AI "as a normal procedure" are "literally dehumanizing the workforce." actor Bryan Cranston said recently on a picket line. "It's not good for society. It's not good for our environment..."

There's no better way for me to conclude this but by quoting Anne Rice who said "Don't bend, don't water it down, and don't try to make it logical, don't edit your own soul according to the fashion. Rather, follow your most intense obsessions mercilessly." So after

much is said, do we stay skeptics (laggards), conservatives (late majority), pragmatists (early majority), or do we step ahead of things and become visionary writers (early adopters using AI as an assistant)?

Thank you.