

"Co-authors?" New Narrative Possibilities in AI-enhanced Environments

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The intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) and storytelling has opened new avenues for creative expression, reshaping traditional narrative structures and authorship models. Advances in natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning have enabled AI to generate compelling text, co-author fiction, and even assist in world-building and character development.

This paper examines the ways in which AI functions as both a creative assistant and a partner that provides feedback to ongoing iteration that can move far beyond a human author's initial artistic intention. We discuss how Generative AI tools enhance plotline creation yet still require human judgment for thematic coherence, emotional depth, and cultural resonance. AI can rapidly generate ideas, plot developments, and refine language, making it a valuable tool. However, AI's reliance on pattern recognition and pre-existing story lines raises questions about originality, and bias. Furthermore, AI-generated content often lacks the contextual awareness and emotional nuance that define compelling storytelling, necessitating human intervention a deeper narrative engagement. To address the pitfalls and advantages presented by AI-enhanced environments for narrative, we consider the broader implications of human-AI collaborative storytelling on traditional narratological concepts such as mimesis. Paul Ricoeur expands on the Aristotelian notion of mimesis—the representation of human experience through storytelling—by defining it as a threefold process: mimesis1, mimesis2, and mimesis3. Mimesis1 refers to the prefiguration of experience, encompassing the cultural, symbolic, and temporal structures that make storytelling possible. It acknowledges that human actions are already embedded in a meaningful framework before they are narrated. We argue that the large language models that enable AI are the equivalent of Ricoeur's mimesis1 level. Mimesis2, or configuration, represents the act of emplotment, where disparate elements are structured into a coherent narrative, imposing intelligibility on events and transforming them into a meaningful whole. This stage, central to Ricoeur's narratology, highlights the power of narrative to mediate between lived experience and novel narrative representations. Our paper suggests that the collaboration between AI and human narrators is central to this stage of mimesis2, where many iterations and decisions take place, led by the human narrator who chooses which AI-generated storylines, characters, settings, etc. to maintain, revise or discard. Finally mimesis3, where the reader interprets and integrates a narrative, may be impacted by AI's role in storytelling. Does knowing a story is enhanced by AI-generated narrative change its reception, credibility, or emotional impact? Exploring these shifts is key as AI becomes more involved in narrative creation.

The significance of this threefold model lies in its ability to acknowledge that AI-human storytelling collaborations are not merely passive reproductions of existing storyworlds, but a reconfiguration and interpretation that deepens the comprehension and engagement with human

experience and thereby reflect a process of reflective creativity. Ultimately, the paper posits that the future of storytelling lies not in human-versus-AI dichotomies but in collaborative models where human ingenuity and AI capabilities augment each other to create richer, more dynamic narratives.