

What AI may herald for literary studies? Some musings.

Anirudh Rao

The advent of any technology heralds its own fears and favors.

The printing press scared the scribes but, acquired the favor of readers.

The pen drives threatened the studios of CD ROMs but, put the larger body of human creation into pockets than the earlier storage technologies.

A famous historian and a philosopher Yuval Noah Harari, in a recent discussion pointed that there has not been a time when he was asked to predict about the human civilization, he felt uneasy to predict for 20 years from now.

Although the focus of technology has so far been [to ape the human ability, there had not been a milestone in the technological development in the human history where the machines are thought to think for themselves.

Can AI replicate the aspect of creativity which until now has been human?

Do we live in a time that needs the redefinition of creativity?

These are some of the questions that are on the limelight since the advent of AI.

"Knives and bombs do not themselves decide whom to kill. They are dumb tools, lacking the intelligence necessary to process information and make independent decisions. In contrast, AI can process information by itself, and thereby replace humans in decision making. AI isn't a tool—it's an agent."- Harari.

This poses a serious question on the human creativity of which the literature is a byproduct.

Any classic in literature has been a classic because, it has either reconstructed or deconstructed the regular existent pattern of language. The great literatures have come through the alterations of daily life-experiences altered to suit the human interest.

The question today is can AI live like humans and alter those experiences to make the literature that is great?

Another prominent intellectual Noam Chomsky is critical of these generative models and critiques AI as "Stochastic Parrots" meaning they cannot be creative in their thinking but, generate the response and not the ideas purely through the vast archive of information available to them.

Through the theory of his universal grammar, he derives that the creativity is human and biologically psychological.

the debate of what AI may herald for literary studies continues but, the conclusion is left to time.

Let us breathe the air of peace and continue with our reading and discussion of brilliant human endeavor until then!