


Chapter 11

Perceptions, Roles, Considerations, and Practices in Literary Criticism in the Age of AI: Towards a Framework for Responsible AI Use in Literary Criticism

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ABSTRACT

Literary criticism involves the appraisal of a literary work based on literary merit. In the advent of generative AI, the art of literary criticism could be reduced to the work of an AI application given the appropriate prompts. Thus, this explores the perceptions of graduate literature students on the role of AI in the work of literary criticism. Findings reveal that AI should only be used as an assistive technology in the process of literary criticism. Likewise, they also mentioned that the art of literary criticism is still very much a human act. They also noted that, while AI can produce a criticism of a work, it can never substitute the appraisal of a critic. Additionally, they also factored in ethical considerations in relying on the literary criticism produced by AI. Similarly, the respondents also shared some practices that they have adopted in their respective contexts as literature teachers when they require literary criticism submissions. Finally, the study proposes a framework that stakeholders can adapt consistent with their contexts and needs in light of these findings.

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INTRODUCTION

It is common knowledge that generative artificial intelligence, more commonly known as AI, has taken over all aspects of people's lives. Generative artificial intelligence has particularly changed the landscape of the academia with the emergence of assistive technologies such as Chat GPT which is capable of producing volumes and volumes of texts through curated prompts. While there are perceived advantages in relation to using these assistive technologies, there are also now debates on its specific role (in other words what constitutes and limit it) in the academic context. The same observations were noted by Premkumar (2024) who did a study on the impact of artificial intelligence in literary creation and criticism. Given such assertion, this study explores on the perceptions of five graduate literature students who are in the practice of literary criticism on the role and considerations of generative artificial intelligence in the process and the art of literary criticism.

It is known that literary criticism is the appraisal of a work based on an applied theory or based on its literary merit. With the emergence of generative artificial intelligence, many scholars could probably be tempted to reduce the work into AI. That is producing a criticism of a work just purely based on the prompts generated from Chat GPT for example. While there has been no recorded case on this yet, it is an interesting and a very plausible scenario. In fact, Kharis Publishing in 2023 already anticipated such scenario by saying that artificial intelligence has the capacity to produce literary analysis and critique. They highlighted that artificial intelligence, while cannot replace a human-critic, can function as a literary critic which may provide insight and perspective on to the text in question. Additionally, Jabalselvi, Mohanraj, and Anitha (2024), in their study titled *The Rise of AI in English Language and Literature*, also highlighted this fact by pointing out how generative artificial intelligence has changed the landscape of English language and English literature in general. They mentioned that the emergence (and by extension, the use) of generative artificial intelligence in language and literature has prompted a paradigm shift in terms of producing, evaluating, and analyzing literary works. Aside from that, they also underscored on the fact that such emergence and use of generative artificial intelligence has presented intriguing issues as well as opportunities that involve morality and the society in general. Issues that were pointed out include data privacy, algorithmic bias, and replacement of human labor. In addition, issues of copyright, authorship, and originality continue to plague the debate on this issue.

As such, this study aims to contribute to the discourse on the specific role of generative artificial intelligence, highlighting the fact that it is here to stay and its limits especially in the very human act of doing literary criticism and the possible ethical considerations that may come with its use. Aside from that, the presence of these issues (and opportunities) point to the very fact that generative artificial

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