Stylin' and profilin'

Author:

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Role:

Learning Designer

Institution/organisation:

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Context:

Higher education, Creative writing

Tool(s) used:

ChatGPT

My idea

Use AI-generated text to delve into the specifics of literary styles by analyzing its approximation of different authors' writing. For example, asking the AI to generate some text in the style of Virginia Woolf, Cormac McCarthy, and David Foster Wallace.

What I aimto achieve

Als such as ChatGPT aren't "intelligent" in the way some people think. But it is (already) good at creating pastiche texts in the style of particular authors. Considering "why" the Al emulated the style (sentence formation, word selection, punctuation and grammar, etc.) as it did requires learners to undertake deeper consideration of the works of the authors in question to pinpoint style particulars, and where the parallels are found in the authors' work. It is at least as important to consider where ChatGPT gets things wrong.

Where the inspiration comes from

I've worked with faculty who teach writing and taught it myself. Al-generated builds on traditional compare/contrast/analysis by providing another layer for considering the construction and effects of writing style. There are many possibilities for building on this kind of activity, including using different genres, having students write in different styles, or even asking them to emulate what they think the Al might produce before asking it to do so.

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When I wrote this pasticke in the 1980s, there was nowhere to sellit, so I posted it on plume poles. Silean Gunn Borland's "Hypersurgery" a Boon to Do-It-Yourselfers

These tired old eyes have seen many an epic software hack, but nothing in recent years has delighted this jaded silicon jockey as much as the new hypertext version of Borland's "Plastic Surgery."

With the touch of a keystroke, the user can change her nose, his ears, even its pronouns. And should you make a mistake, an Undo key comes to the rescue, provided you still have fingers to activate it.

In addition to commonly requested facial features and body parts, Borland provides a custom-design capability that enables you to build your own orifices, cartilaginous projections, warts, moles, and polyps. The hypertext capability allows you to link all warts (for example) to a custom-designed model; when you change the model, all your warts are automatically updated.

The speed of all this cutting and pasting depends, of course, on the processing power you can command. Right now, the program runs too slow for the memory-impaired home user. But believe me, when the new 90386 chips hit the handhelds, we will be looking at a whole lot of action on the streets of LA.

- E. Gunn

A pastiche piece of hypertext software (Borland's "Plastic Surgery") with a note by the author, Eileen Gunn, that in the 1980s there was nowhere to sell the piece.

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