

Exploring the Distinction between AI-Generated Stories and Human-Crafted Narratives: A Comparative Study

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Abstract:

Recently, there has been significant debate about the emergence of AI in creative domains and its impact on storytelling and narrative creation. While some studies suggest that human-authored and AI-generated stories are barely distinguishable, others find that AI-generated stories are poorly structured and often contain repetitive phrases. This study narrows its focus by examining the classic twisty tale *The Necklace* (1884) by French author Guy de Maupassant, scrutinizing its key features alongside another similar story generated by AI. The AI was provided with six specific prompts to produce a story closely resembling *The Necklace* and generated a tale titled *The Gilded Watch*. The two stories are analyzed based on four criteria: narrative structure, character development, language and style, and cultural or historical context. The study finds a significant disparity between AI-generated and human-authored stories, with the former often lacking key storytelling elements. It also suggests that AI's ability to capture human emotions remains limited.

Keywords: AI, Stories, *The Necklace*, *The Gilded Watch*, Impact

I. Introduction

From oral traditions to modern literature, storytelling has been an essential medium for gathering, preserving, and transmitting knowledge across societies. Stories reflect human feelings and emotions through diverse life experiences and serve multiple purposes, including entertainment, education, and social critique. However, with the advent of AI technology and its multifaceted capabilities, there is ongoing debate and concern that ChatGPT—an AI chatbot based on Generative Pre-Trained Transformer technology—may replace the human voice by producing coherent and contextually relevant stories, particularly as numerous narratives in specific languages are now generated by AI bots but presented as human-authored (Browne).

ChatGPT was introduced to the public in 2022 and quickly gained widespread attention, revolutionizing how people acquire and maintain information (Amirjalili, Neysani, and Nikbakht). Academics, media, and educators have raised concerns about ChatGPT's potential disruptive effects, especially within academic settings where storytelling and narration have traditionally been exclusively human domains (Schulten). Experts worry that ChatGPT might entirely replace the human voice, raising critical questions about the authenticity and integrity of storytelling, which fundamentally expresses an individual's inner world. These concerns are justified as ChatGPT continuously updates itself and can generate new ideas and approaches to current themes more efficiently than humans (Harari).

Traditionally, storytelling has been a uniquely human endeavor through which authors express their perceptions, emotions, and intellectual reflections. Uniqueness is a fundamental feature of storytelling; for a story to succeed and gain popularity, it must possess distinct qualities that differentiate it from others (Richard and Elder). Stories vary in subject, narrative voice, and authorial attitude. Moreover, human-crafted stories offer readers the opportunity to explore different lives and perspectives, as stories deeply convey the experiences and thoughts of specific characters or authors. Novelty is another crucial feature that enriches storytelling; readers expect fresh perceptions and encounters that challenge or resonate with them emotionally. AI-generated stories often lack both uniqueness and novelty, as AI typically relies on existing data and patterns without lived experience. AI-generated narratives tend to imitate human texts and base their algorithms on existing fiction (Begus). This article aims to explore the main differences between human-authored stories and AI-generated texts by comparing Maupassant's *The Necklace*,

translated to English by Henry James in 1896 with the AI-generated *The Gilded Watch*.

II. Literature Review

With the rise of AI's pervasive influence across scientific fields, literary scholars and critics have expressed concern that storytelling—traditionally a purely human craft—might also be affected, and that ChatGPT could replace the human voice in narrative creation. Consequently, numerous studies have examined ChatGPT's storytelling capabilities and compared human-authored and AI-generated texts to address these concerns.

Begus (2023) compares 250 human-made stories to 80 AI-generated texts and finds that human-authored stories tend to be more imaginative and deeper than those created by ChatGPT. Regarding gender roles and sexuality, Begus's study finds that AI-generated texts are more progressive and accepting of diverse gender models than human-written stories. Huang, Vishnubhota, and Rudzics compare the emotional and descriptive qualities of several short stories by humans and AI, concluding that AI-generated stories differ significantly from human ones in emotional and descriptive traits. AI texts are generally more positive, less active, and exhibit greater control compared to human-authored stories.

In contrast, a study titled *The Imitation Game* presents an in-depth analysis of the similarities and differences between AI-generated and human-authored stories and concludes that distinguishing between them is extremely challenging. Because ChatGPT relies on human feedback for improvement, the line between AI and human texts is increasingly blurred (Hayawi, Shahriar, and Mathew). Haoran Chu, a professor at the University of Florida, studies reader reception of AI-generated stories, finding that despite AI's ability to produce well-structured narratives comparable to human work, readers tend to rate AI-written stories more negatively, reflecting distrust toward AI storytelling (Hamilton).

Deorgiou's linguistic analysis reveals that AI-generated texts often contain repetitive phrases and overused structural patterns compared to human-authored stories. AI narratives exhibit less coherence and depth regarding themes and plots. Furthermore, while AI texts rely on predictable, statistically common words, human-authored stories employ a wider vocabulary and more complex sentence structures.

These studies collectively enhance understanding of AI's impact on storytelling. However, the present study narrows the focus to a direct comparison between Maupassant's *The Necklace* and an AI-

generated story, *The Gilded Watch*, which was created based on six detailed prompts:

1. Set in late 19th-century France, depicting themes of class distinction, dissatisfaction with life, and personal collapse.
2. Plot centered on a woman who borrows an expensive item to attend a formal event, loses it, and faces tragic consequences.
3. A female protagonist discontent with her humble lifestyle who desires wealth and fame, but whose desire leads to ruin.
4. Themes of pride, repentance, and sacrifice, exploring consequences of poor decisions.
5. A twist ending that recontextualizes the protagonist's struggles and reveals their hardships were unnecessary.
6. A length of approximately 2,500 words, with a tone mixing realism and irony.

Based on these prompts, ChatGPT generated *The Gilded Watch*. This study compares and contrasts the two stories.

III. Analysis

1. Narrative Structure

At the outset, both *The Necklace* and *The Gilded Watch* establish a background that prepares readers for a twisty tale. Both depict a female protagonist dissatisfied with her current life and yearning for change. In *The Necklace*, readers meet Mathilde, a beautiful young middle-class woman married to a clerk in the Ministry of Education. Together they lead a modest life that Mathilde cannot accept. Her husband, Loisel, wanting to please her, secures an invitation to a prestigious celebration exclusive to the upper class. In *The Gilded Watch*, Eleanor is introduced as a beautiful young woman from rural England who, after marrying William Hargrove, a clerk in a shipping office, has relocated to London. She, too, is dissatisfied and dreams of changing her situation. William, aware of this, works hard and surprises her one evening with a card to the New Year's Gala at the Grand Hall, where elites gather.

Both stories set the stage with heroines discontented with their lives, craving wealth and status. However, while the AI-generated story explains Eleanor's dissatisfaction, it lacks the societal critique and cultural context deeply embedded in *The Necklace*. *The Gilded Watch* offers no insight into the social environment or the underlying causes of Eleanor's discontent.

A key storytelling element is the depiction of culture and lifestyle from the author's historical perspective. Literature serves as a record of social norms and traditions, preserving them for future generations. AI-generated stories lack this essential feature, rendering them inferior in representing history and culture. In *The Necklace*, Mathilde's

middle-class status is marked by her suffering over the poverty of her home—the old furniture and drab curtains. “All these things that another woman of her class would not even have noticed, tormented her and made her resentful” (Maupassant). This passage subtly conveys class divisions and social norms, even if not explicitly stated.

2. Character Development

Maupassant crafts characters with psychological depth and keen human insight. Mathilde’s inner life is intricately portrayed, detailing her desires, regrets, and hardships in a manner that encourages reader empathy, making her a multidimensional figure. Secondary characters are simply but effectively depicted, enhancing relatability. Mathilde’s husband, Loisel, contrasts with her character, highlighting her flaws and complexities. Her transformation unfolds gradually and logically, reflecting Maupassant’s realistic style.

At the story’s start, Mathilde is unhappy, burdened by poverty: “She dressed plainly because she had never been able to afford anything better, but she was as unhappy as if she had once been wealthy.” Upon receiving the invitation to the party, she is ecstatic. On the night of the event, she is a radiant success: “Madame Loisel was a success. She was prettier than all the other women, elegant, gracious, smiling, and full of joy... She danced wildly, with passion, drunk on pleasure, forgetting everything in the triumph of her beauty...”

However, after losing the necklace, her life transforms dramatically. She abandons concerns for beauty or social status and endures years of labor to repay her debts. “Madame Loisel looked old now. She had become strong, hard and rough like all women of impoverished households. With hair half combed, with skirts awry, and reddened hands, she talked loudly as she washed the floor...”

Despite her hardships, there is a sense of contentment; her pride caused her downfall, but her perseverance humbled her. This character arc is vital to the story’s moral and leaves a lasting impression on readers.

Conversely, *The Gilded Watch* lacks such psychological depth. Eleanor is a simplistic, one-dimensional character who fails to engage readers emotionally. She is described mainly through her physical beauty: “She was a woman of rare beauty, with auburn hair that shimmered like polished copper and sparkling eyes that distinguished her from her peers” (AI). Eleanor’s inner world remains unexplored, rendering her struggles less compelling and her character less alive.

Unlike Mathilde’s organic transformation, Eleanor’s character change feels formulaic and mechanical. Years pass with her only visible change being physical aging: “Years passed, and their lives

became a relentless cycle of toil and sacrifice. Eleanor's beauty faded, her once-bright eyes dulled by exhaustion. She no longer dreamed of grandeur; her only wish was to repay their debts and find some measure of peace." Secondary characters, such as Eleanor's husband William, serve only functional roles without depth. William is dehumanized, existing solely to support Eleanor's desires, with no exploration of his emotions or inner life, which diminishes the story's overall impact.

3. Style and Language

Human-authored stories often exhibit distinctive writing styles, unique metaphors, and specific vocabularies that reflect the individuality of their creators. Human writers develop diverse voices shaped by their personalities, cultural backgrounds, and creative imaginations. When reading two stories by the same author, readers can quickly identify recurring linguistic features or stylistic codes that signal that author's unique voice. Even within a single story, certain expressions or phrases tend to repeat naturally, as humans often favor particular words or ideas when conveying specific emotions. This repetition creates a recognizable signature style.

In contrast, AI-generated stories rely on learned linguistic patterns and statistical probabilities. While AI can produce fluent prose, its outputs are often generic, lacking the emotional nuance and innovative ideas found in human writing. AI can imitate style superficially but cannot generate genuinely novel narratives, as it depends heavily on repetition and formulaic constructions.

Regarding natural flow and rhythm, human stories employ a variety of sentence structures, deliberate pauses, and irregularities to create specific effects. These subtle modulations engage readers and enhance emotional impact. AI-generated narratives, however, tend to adhere strictly to conventional grammatical structures, resulting in a mechanical and predictable flow. AI often overuses certain sentence forms and patterns, leading to monotonous repetition.

An example of human expressiveness is evident in *The Necklace* when Madame Loisel discovers the loss of the necklace and struggles to communicate this shock: "What is the matter?" asked her husband, already half undressed. She turned towards him, panic-stricken. "I have ... I have ... I no longer have Madame Forestier's necklace."

This fragmented, hesitant speech reflects the human experience of shock and fear. Conversely, in *The Gilded Watch*, Eleanor coldly informs her husband: Eleanor clutched William's arm. "The watch, it's missing!" "What do you mean, missing?" he asked, alarmed. "I don't know! It was here, and now it's gone!" The lack of hesitation and emotional complexity highlights a more superficial delivery.

Further, when Madame Loisel meets Madame Forestier years later, Maupassant captures the surprise and shock of recognition: “But — madame — I don’t know. You must have made a mistake.” “No, I am Mathilde Loisel.” Her friend uttered a cry. “Oh! ... my poor Mathilde, how you’ve changed! ...” The emotional resonance and depth are palpable, enabling readers to connect with the characters’ experience. The parallel scene in *The Gilded Watch* lacks this warmth and depth: “Eleanor!” Mrs. Penrose exclaimed. “It’s been ages. How are you?” The flatness of the interaction underscores the AI’s limitations in capturing human emotional subtlety.

4. Cultural and Contextual Understandings

AI-generated stories generally lack authentic cultural or historical references, often narrating events devoid of contextual richness. While AI training data may contain cultural allusions, AI frequently misinterprets or misapplies them, producing narratives that feel outdated or inauthentic. Literature’s value partly lies in its ability to inform readers about particular cultures or historical periods, a function AI-generated stories rarely fulfill. This shortcoming is evident in *The Gilded Watch*, which situates its narrative in Victorian England without providing any meaningful cultural or historical context or insight into the customs of the era.

Conversely, human-authored stories are rich in cultural and historical detail that readers easily recognize and relate to. *The Necklace* is densely embedded with social and cultural elements that illuminate life in late 19th-century France. The narrative subtly critiques social norms and class distinctions through its unfolding events.

For example, the difficulty Mr. Loisel faces in obtaining an invitation to a high-society ball reveals rigid class barriers:

The party was designed exclusively for the wealthy upper class, excluding the working class entirely. Mathilde’s concern about appearing poor among rich women highlights the social stigma attached to poverty: “There is nothing more humiliating than looking poor in the middle of a lot of rich women.” Moreover, readers empathize not only with Mathilde but also with her husband, who sacrifices his own dream of buying a hunting gun to pay for her dress: “Let’s see, Mathilde. How much would a suitable dress cost, one which you could use again on other occasions, something very simple?” She thought for a moment... “I think I could do it with four hundred francs.” He turned a little pale, because he had been saving that exact amount for a hunting trip with friends.

This layered depiction of sacrifice and social pressure adds emotional and cultural depth, enhancing readers' engagement with the story's historical milieu.

Discussion

The comparative analysis reveals clear distinctions between human-authored and AI-generated stories. AI-crafted narratives excel in efficiency, consistency, and grammatical accuracy but fall short in delivering emotional resonance, cultural richness, and psychological insight—elements essential to literary quality. Rather than replacing human writers, AI-generated stories serve as a complement, offering tools to overcome creative blocks, explore alternative plotlines, or speed up the writing process.

Preserving the depth and diversity of literary traditions, however, depends on maintaining the authenticity and intentionality inherent in human storytelling.

Conclusion

AI-generated stories represent significant technological progress, capable of producing consistent and readable prose. Nevertheless, AI's limitations in creativity, emotional depth, and cultural contextualization prevent it from replacing human authors. AI-generated works underscore the enduring importance of human creativity and cultural insight in literature.

Future research should explore the collaborative potential between human writers and AI, as well as the implications for education, publishing, and the arts. Understanding the benefits and constraints of AI storytelling will be crucial in navigating the intersection of technology and creativity in the 21st century.

Recommendations

After conducting this research, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. AI-generated tools should be employed as aids to enhance human creativity and efficiency in writing, rather than as replacements for human authorship, to preserve emotional and cultural depth in storytelling.
2. Educators and readers must be encouraged to critically assess AI-generated texts, acknowledging their technical strengths while recognizing their limitations in conveying cultural and psychological insights.
3. Greater collaboration between human authors and AI technologies is recommended to combine the efficiency of AI with the nuanced creativity of humans, resulting in richer narratives.
4. AI developers should engage cultural and literary experts to improve the contextual and historical accuracy of AI-generated

content, thereby reducing superficial or inaccurate cultural representations.

5. Further academic research is necessary to investigate the impact of AI on literary creation, authorship, and narrative form, to inform ethical and effective integration of AI in literature.

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الملخص

في الأونة الأخيرة، دار جدل كبير حول ظهور الذكاء الاصطناعي في المجالات الإبداعية وتأثيره على سرد القصص وخلق الروايات. بينما تشير عدة دراسات إلى أن القصص التي يكتبها البشر والقصص التي يولدها الذكاء الاصطناعي تكاد تكون غير قابلة للتمييز، تجد دراسات أخرى أن القصص المولدة بواسطة الذكاء الاصطناعي تفتقر إلى البناء الجيد وتحتوي على عدة عبارات متكررة. تركز هذه الدراسة على نطاق ضيق وتفحص القصة الكلاسيكية المشهورة العقد (1884) للكاتب الفرنسي موباسان، مع تحليل مميزات الرئيسية إلى جانب قصة أخرى مماثلة من إنتاج الذكاء الاصطناعي. حيث تم تزويد الذكاء الاصطناعي بستة مطالبات محددة ليُنتج قصة شبيهة جدًا بالقصة الشهيرة العقد، فانتج قصة بعنوان الساعة المطلية بالذهب. تم تحليل القصتين باستخدام أربعة معايير: البنية السردية، تطور الشخصيات، الأسلوب واللغة، والفهم الثقافي أو التاريخي.

تكشف الدراسة عن وجود تفاوت كبير بين القصص التي يكتبها البشر وتلك التي يولدها الذكاء الاصطناعي، حيث تفتقر الأخيرة غالبًا إلى العناصر الأساسية المطلوبة في السرد القصصي. كما تشير الدراسة إلى أن قدرة الذكاء الاصطناعي على التقاط المشاعر الإنسانية لا تزال محدودة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الذكاء الاصطناعي، القصص، العقد، الساعة المطلية بالذهب، التأثير.