

Article

Reimagining Narratives: Evolving Contexts in English Literature and Cultural Discourse

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Abstract: The paper extensively surveys the changing tides in English literature and cultural discourse, investigating how more contemporary scholars have re-read or re-interpreted earlier narratives based on changing socio-political technologies and postcolonial outlooks. Drawing on perspectives from postmodernism, cultural studies, postcolonial theory, and digital humanities, the research looks at how narratives are being re-constituted by globalization, identity politics, and recent digital media accident turnover. The findings provide that there are three modes of narrative evolution: postcolonial re-imaginings that overturn Eurocentric history, the postmodern fragmentation of narrative form, and the trans/media-tion of narrative when originally in print into digital spaces, which establishes a different relationship with the reader. The paper ends by suggesting new interesting avenues for literary analysis in an age of algorithmic storytelling capabilities and AI models. More generally, the paper asserts that literary analyses require more fluid methodologies to account for these shifts.

Keywords: Narrative theory; cultural discourse; postmodern literature; postcolonial

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, we have seen the most significant change in how stories are written, shared, and understood, indicating a transformation of higher education and cultural studies. Until recently, literary analysis was directed mainly by canonized Western texts with standardized conditions, so the categories of author, reader, and text were stable (Bhabha, 1994; Hayles, 2008). Such structures have been transformed into significantly different, destabilized conditions within narrative studies that reflect the larger cultural, technological, and epistemological shifts redefining a common understanding of the text, who tells the stories, and how meaning is made in an increasingly connected world.

In response to these new interpretive and cultural shifts, it is possible to describe three critical phenomena in the context of an evolution in narrative theory and practice. First, a postcolonial turn has changed the literary landscape by centering voices and perspectives systematically excluded from established literary canons. The narrative, as authored by former colonies, does not simply enter into the canon; instead, colonies, with their counter-narratives, wholly redefined the conditions of literary studies by destabilizing colonial historiography and Eurocentric epistemologies (Achebe, 1958; Rushdie, 1981). These conditions require rethinking literary value, historical representation, and narrative politics.

Second, postmodern fragmentation has changed the structure of narratives and reading expectations. Following Lyotard's (1979) influential pronouncement of the end of grand narratives, some contemporary literature has embraced experimental forms of narrative that intentionally reject linearity, stable meaning, and traditional notions of textuality. We see this fragmentation in various ways, including unreliable narration, disjunction in time, mirrored narrative, and deliberate ambiguity. These narrative elements not only reflect the postmodern skepticism toward totalitarianism but also actively engage readers to take part in meaning-making.

Finally, the digital age has brought verifiably new conditions for storytelling that reconsider traditional definitions of narrative and complexity in textuality. New technologies have developed interactive narratives, non-linear storytelling structures, and even algorithmic literary works (Jenkins, 2006; Pressman, 2014). Ultimately, these developments blur previous distinctions of author and reader, medium and message, production and reception. While the digital age has not only created literacies appropriate for narrative, it has transformed our relationship with narrative as a whole.

1.2 Research Objectives

This paper anticipates performing three main tasks in considering these narrative changes. The first will outline the theoretical foundations of narrative change in modern literature, bringing together several of the most important ideas from postcolonial theory, postmodernism, and digital humanities. This will construct a firm foundation for thinking about contemporary changes in narrative practice.

Second, the paper will closely read key case studies that illustrate postcolonial, postmodern, and digital narrative experimentation. This close reading will show how

the theoretical idea plays out in literary texts and digital narratives, and will reveal both continuities and ruptures from traditional narrative expressions. The case studies will reflect different cultural contexts, modes of expression, and forms of media to illustrate the different avenues for literary experimentation that contemporary authors are pursuing.

Third, this paper will propose new ideas for literary analysis, building on these close readings that can better encapsulate narrative practices in an age of cultural and technological change. This analysis will consider the complexities of transnational literatures, transmedia narratives, and algorithmically generated texts, offering scholars ideas to better appreciate contemporary narratives' complexity.

1.3 Methodology

To achieve these goals, this study takes an interdisciplinary methodological approach consisting of several complementary methods. First, the study engages in close textual analysis of key literary texts that have established new narrative forms to see how they engage with and alter previously established narrative conventions. This method from traditional literary critical studies will be beneficial in analyzing print-based narratives that nonetheless challenge conventional forms.

Second, the study also includes critical discourse analysis methods to engage with digital narratives and new media storytelling. This is because, unlike print texts, digital texts are usually located within complex networks of paratexts, users, and platform-specific affordances that demand analytical methods that go beyond close reading and traditional literary criticism. The study will examine how the digital environment impacts narrative potential and limitations.

Third, the study engages in theoretical synthesis, combining insights from postmodern theory, postcolonial theory, and the digital humanities fields into a single understanding of contemporary narrative modes. A synthetic approach, such as is called for in this moment, where narrative innovations are composed of aspects from all three domains, and critics cannot limit their inquiries to one domain.

The method will be further enhanced through comparative analysis, where our study examines how the logics and sensibilities of developing narrative techniques look different across cultural contexts and platforms. The comparative aspect of the study will allow explanation of both the global spread of narrative forms and their adaptations at the local level, and the comparative aspect is important to coming to a fuller understanding of contemporary narratives, mainly when they occur across and in an interconnected but culturally diverse world.

2. Theoretical Framework

Modern scholarly engagement with narrative in formal and informal contexts calls for an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that considers the dramatic changes in story-making and story-consumption that have occurred. The following section establishes three disciplinary touchstones that ground our understanding of evolving narrative forms: postmodern textual theory, postcolonial studies, and digital

humanities. Collectively, these theoretical levers and the ensuing work can be used to analyze new forms of storytelling in the 21st century.

2.1 Postmodernism and the Death of the Author

Roland Barthes' influential essay "The Death of the Author" (1977) marked a critical point in literary theory and raised questions regarding textual authority and the role of the subject. Barthes declared that "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author" (p. 148), signaling a significant theoretical move away from viewing the writer as an authority controlling the meaning of the text towards the reader as an active participant in the interpretive process. This location of meaning acknowledges Jacques Derrida's (1967) notion of deconstruction, which highlighted the instability of meaning in language and challenged the nimbleness of the textual authority. The postmodern condition, as articulated by Jean-François Lyotard (1979), underlined this challenge of authority with its skepticism toward grand narratives and totalizing explanations.

Contemporary literature has thoroughly embodied this postmodern condition, as shown by David Foster Wallace's monumental novel *Infinite Jest* (1996). The work embraces fragmentation, recursive structures, and ambiguity in a way that demands the reader's full engagement. The novel's extensive footnoting system, nonlinear chronology, and unending narrative become sites of meaning in a narrative intended to be as committed to anti-narrative as it is to a story. Wallace's fiction, like other postmodern works, engages with Brian McHale's (1987) notion of the ontologically dominant, the preoccupation with questions of being and reality rather than epistemological issues (the postmodern fiction is animated by ontological concerns rather than truth claims). Similarly, the texts of Jorge Luis Borges foreshadow many of the narrative devices contemporary literature utilizes, including engagements with narrative in stories like "The Garden of Forking Paths" (1941), which exist in an infinite, labyrinth-like network of possibilities rather than a linear forward progression.

These narrative devices demonstrate more than a breakdown of narrative. Instead, they are one of the circumstances for literary analysis, as they require readers to abandon our structural expectations of coherence and closure and embrace what Umberto Eco (1989) calls the "open work," or a process of embracing multiple, sometimes contradictory refrains to literary structures. Instead of a stable object, the postmodern text grows on the belief that readers define meaning and configurations of meaning on every reading. After these points are established, we can approach the value in examining contemporary literature's engagement with digital culture and the ways the narrative has constructed new modes of reading in a postmodern condition.

2.2 Postcolonial Theory and Counter-Narratives

Postcolonial theory provides helpful insights on how narratives operate as a tool of colonial power and a means of resistance. The notion of hybridity, introduced by Homi Bhabha (1994), indicates how colonial discourses are transformed in some form by engagement with local, indigenous cultures, producing a "third space" of enunciation (p. 38). This theoretical framework explains how postcolonial literature appropriates

and disrupts colonial narrative forms at the same time. The foundational question posed by Gayatri Spivak (1988), "Can the subaltern speak?" (p. 104), further delineates the political stakes of narrative representation, examining how a range of mechanisms are habitually employed to silence or appropriate the voices of those who have been marginalized.

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) is a clear example of a postcolonial counter-narrative. Achebe's novel locates Igbo perspectives and cultural practices at the center of its narrative, thereby dismantling colonial representations in texts such as Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Achebe's novel, with its three-part structure that moves from pre-colonial cohesion, to colonial rupture, to postcolonial alienation, is an enactment of the contestation of colonial discourse through literature that Edward Said (1978) discusses in *Orientalism*. Similarly, Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) enacts a feminist postcolonial intervention by providing the voice of Bertha Mason, the silenced Caribbean wife who is the madwoman in the attic in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.

More recent texts, such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), show how postcolonial narratives prepare to tell the stories of impacted colonial subjects while developing narratives about questions of postcolonial conflict and those from a diasporic perspective. Postcolonial novels have engaged the legacy of colonialism while examining post-independence conflicts in both the colonies and the diaspora. Here we see what Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) describes as "provincializing Europe", where postcolonial narratives work to decenter Western narratives of history while still accounting for their import, investment, and implication. Thus, postcolonial theory provides some potential tools for evaluating how contemporary narratives reckon with the multiplicities of power in an increasingly globalized literary marketplace.

2.3 Digital Humanities and New Media Narratives

The digital revolution has engendered the need for theoretical positions on narrative analysis, as Katherine Hayles (2008) articulated in her groundbreaking work on electronic literature. Hayles asserts that digital texts require a "close reading," using the simultaneity of "hyper attention" (p.12), which acknowledges the different cognitive modalities required by reading on a screen. This theorisation begins to address the formal innovation of hypertext fiction, like Shelley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl* (1995), which proposes a navigating experience of a lexia-based network versus using a traditional model of reading as sequential encoding.

The digital humanities have also comprehended the notion of algorithmic narratives, or stories that are produced or generated in conjunction with an AI system, raising questions of authorship and creativity. As Nick Montfort (2017) discusses in the field of computational narrative, code can be used to generate literary texts related to literary structure, functionality, and many other questions of textual focus, such as intentionality and interpretation. Furthermore, Henry Jenkins' (2006) concept of transmedia storytelling provides structures for understanding narratives constructed across multiple platforms, building participatory audiences' world-building narratives.

These digital narration platforms, and even new story forms, demonstrate the need for analytical frameworks attuned to notions of interactivity, procedural writing, and networked reading. As Pressman (2014) notes, the field of digital literature inhabits the spaces between literary studies, media theory, and computer science, thus necessitating our engagement with truly interdisciplinary textual analysis. The digital humanities must understand how narrative continues to transform in a digital age.

3. Case Studies in Narrative Evolution

As presented in this section, we have three detailed case studies that will provide an example of the transformative narrative strategies laid out in our theoretical framework. Each case study investigates representative texts that illustrate ways that postcolonial reimagining, postmodern experimentation, and digital innovations have recalibrated 21st-century storytelling.

3.1 Postcolonial Reimagining

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899): A Comparative Analysis

The comparative analysis of these two widely acclaimed literary texts notably illuminates the capacity of postcolonial literature to rewrite Imperial narratives. *Heart of Darkness* presents colonial consequences and European encounters with Africa as conceived through the moral decay of the European colonizers and the absence of humanity embedded in European representations of Africa. In contrast, Achebe's novel systematically deconstructs this representation by juxtaposing Igbo cosmology and traditional social structures. Achebe's notable articulation of Conrad as a "thoroughgoing racist" can be traced to his depersonalized portrayal of the African characters, who are positioned as passive background characters, with little agency and/or personification, and/or encoded as disembodied voices (Achebe, 1977).

Things Fall Apart is a counter-narrative to the colonial European gaze, depicting community life in the Igbo village before European contact. The first third of the novel lays out the complexity of social hierarchy, law, and religion that counters the stereotype of African "primitivism." Additionally, Achebe employs proverbs and oral storytelling techniques to frame this narrative in indigenous epistemologies. When the missionaries arrive in Part Two, their disruption is framed by the culture's and community life's established richness. Thus, colonialism was also destructive without romanticizing the culture or perspective of the Igbo people before the arrival of colonialism.

In the narrative structure itself, there is a postcolonial act in the frame. Unlike Conrad's use of a colonial frame story (Marlow telling the story to the unnamed narrator) that does several layers of disfigurement of African voices, Achebe uses a third-person omniscient arrangement to give "interiority" to the Igbo characters. This change in narrative technique accomplishes what Wilson Harris calls the "limbo gateway," or a space in the framework that a postcolonial writer uses to deconstruct the colonial literary form to represent what had previously been articulated as impossible to characterize (Harris, 1970).

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981): Magical Realism as Historiographic Intervention

Rushdie's Booker Prize-winning novel exemplifies postcolonial writers who have used magical realism to examine and locate (more) nuanced voices against formally sanctioned versions of history. The protagonist, Saleem Sinai, was born during India's independence. In contrast, other narrative arcs in the book demonstrate that he is telepathically linked to others born at that historical moment, or "midnight's children." The premised fantastical nature of his narrative allows Rushdie to examine the contested notions of postcolonial nationhood, using Linda Hutcheon's (1988: 238) phrase "historiographic metafiction," as texts that are self-consciously engaged with creating history that is counter-narrative to some officially sanctioned version.

The book's narrative technique mimics the book's narrative theme. Saleem's account ends up eternally interrupting itself with digressions, contradictions, and fantasticality that undercut any authority of historicity. His statement that "to understand just one life, you have to swallow the world" (Rushdie, 1981: 109) is emblematic of the project's complex intent to contain a multitude of postcolonial Indian experiences within a unitary (if fragmented) narrative.

Saleem Sinai's book anticipated postcolonial work to display Indian English as a colonial language infused with Indian idioms and/or syntax to demonstrate equivalent engagement with the realities of postcolonial experience. Bill Ashcroft (1989: 29) discusses hybrid or code-switching literature as rendering the English language into what he terms a re-placed English; a transformed English that maintains cultural memory engaged with its colonial history, yet narrates particularly postcolonial realities that formally challenge the colonial project's historical narrative.

The circles in the book's structure, circling back to the beginning of the novel's narrative, offer readers a view of historical reprisal and the ongoing process of building (postcolonial) nations, and also how history is reinterpreted in more postcolonial ways

3.2 Postmodern Experimentation

Italo Calvino's *If on a winter's night a traveler* (1979): Reader-as-Protagonist

Calvino's experimental novel signifies the exploration of postmodern narrative innovation through the reader's radical involvement in the narrative. The reader is immediately engaged as the protagonist of the narrative through the second-person narration ("You are about to begin reading Italo Calvino's new novel...") and navigates the reading experience of their reality rather than imagining them separated from it. This engages Barthes' notion of the "death of the author" through its overt acknowledgment of reading as behavior being central to the narrative.

The novel is ten beginnings of various novels, stopping momentarily before the reader becomes actively engaged. This undercuts conventional novels and reflects postmodern suspicion regarding the completion of a narrative or totalizing explanations. Each false start, or beginning, is also read as a genre (noir, political thriller, romance) and illustrates how genre conventions shape the reader's expectations

from text. The metafictional commentary layered between fragments is what Waugh (1984) terms "double-coding," simultaneously striving to narrate, but commenting on the narrative endeavor mediating the text. Furthermore, Calvino's playful inversion of linearity presages digital hypertext fiction where the readers choose the subsequent path to continue through the same narrative material. The last image of the "perfect book" and the recognition that it can only exist as fragments in a library suggest that meaning is generated from reading and making colorful connections to textual shards rather than any inherently connected narrative.

Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010): Non-linear Time and Digital Storytelling

Egan's Pulitzer Prize-winning book advances postmodern experimentation in the digital age, in its unique treatment of time and media. In its narrative, movement across decades and perspectives occurs in various but coherent narratives, where each chapter maintains its autonomy as a story but informs something larger in a hybrid text and a large narrative text. It might be helpful to recall the term "mosaic novel" employed by David Mitchell (2004). It is about a comprehensible structure where discrete narratives converge in connecting patterns only available from a narrative distance horizontally, if not vertically.

In addition to the narrative, the novel's most eye-catching formal innovation occurs in the "PowerPoint chapter," a story composed of presentation slides to convey information in a corporate boardroom. Given its characteristics as a new digital age narrative form of fragmented attention, this narrative structure expresses emotional poignancy in an impersonal context. Egan addresses the postmodern question of what digital technology has done to human relationship development—hellos expressed through social media and music piracy, digital technology, and communications technologies (including social media).

In parallel to the demographic journey of the text, a nonlinear chronology of stories intends to engage all of the collected documents in a contextual framework organized around "the goon" referenced in the title. Egan uses the simultaneous development of stories about characters across time, allowing for identity recognition over space and time tens of years later, to demonstrate how people create meaning in their identity transformation in a non-continuous series of combinations while moving through time. Egan's idea, as bricks in development, represents a new design of the development of postmodern texture in time continuity, similar to past applications of texture.

3.3 Digital and Transmedia Narratives

Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves* (2000): Ergodic Literature and Hypertextual Reading

Danielewski's novel operates on the interdependence of postmodern and digital textuality as a print work. For example, the text's elaborate paratextual apparatus (footnotes within footnotes, colored text, pages using mirrors) calls what Espen Aarseth

(1997) identifies as an "ergodic" reading effort. The novel relies on its central conceit: a documentary film about a haunted house with dimensions that seem to contradict the laws of space. This narrative quality that distorts dimensions is metaphorical of the text; it is a contemporary text that seems to rely on narrative to explain the illogical textual invention. However, it expands beyond the boundaries of conventional literature, just as the house expands beyond conventional dimensions.

Underlying the film documentary metaphor is a narrative that follows a blind man working as a film critic analyzing the film of a family who has lived in a haunted house. The layers of nested environmental and narrative mediation lead the reader to question every narrative perspective, the validity of the experience as both a spectator and a referent of the filmic footage, offering one possibility and the blind man's experience of narrative as a second, questionable perspective. In this way, the ambivalence about the reliability of a point of view and the attribution of experience questions the reliability of the reader. The visual experimentation with typography and page layouts also hints at the possibility of deconstructing while reconstructing textual engagements and language-related experience, even offering a hint at the possibility of digital reading practices where reading a text becomes a spatial experience rather than a linguistic experience.

Twitter Fiction and Interactive Storytelling

The advent of micro fiction has appeared with Twitter (i.e., Jennifer Egan's "Black Box") to mark a new development in narrative compression and serialization. These pieces, which are very short stories, take up space within the confines of literary technology - social media - and demonstrate how new digital environments will create new forms of narrative. Likewise, interactive fiction applications, such as Device 6 (Simogo, 2013), blend gameplay with narrative where the text reacts to reader input by manifesting ways that highlight postmodern theories of reader participation.

These digital narrative forms represent more than stubborn challenges to traditional concepts of authorship, reading as sequential, and boundaries of the text. These formats demonstrate the next iteration in the evolution of narrative, continuing postmodern and postcolonial innovations within new technological environments.

4. Future Directions: AI and Algorithmic Storytelling

The introduction of artificial intelligence in literary composition represents potentially the most extreme evolution in narrative history as a cultural product since the printing press's creation. Entering a phase of literary production that some scholars call "post-human," artificial intelligence systems such as GPT-3, Claude, and additional large-language models are dramatically modifying our perceptions of authorship, creativity, and reading interpretation. This section will address three important elements of this transition: the technical capabilities of existing AI systems, ethical implications, and methodological concerns within literary studies.

The Emergence of AI Literature

As demonstrated today, currently available systems can produce coherent texts in narrative form, in multiple genres, from poetry to the short story form, to novellas. In 2016, self-published one of the Road, an AI-generated "sequel" to Jack Kerouac's iconic *On the Road*, heralding this new era, followed by arguably more compelling experiments in collaboration, such as *Lithium* (2018), a novella co-written via prompts between an artificial intelligence and human editor. Current systems are built upon a transformer architecture with access to vast electronic corpora of writing by humans to generate probabilistically coherent narrative text (Vaswani et al., 2017). An important difference between the current AI narrative methods and previous attempts at computational creativity is the availability of existing style or thematic consistency and the capabilities for incorporating subtle vectoring from intertextual works.

Nevertheless, while AI can compose text with increasing narrative complexity, the AI process remains fundamentally distinct from human creativity. Boden (2016) points out that AI generates multiple novel combinations about a specific prompt, but does not possess authentic semantic or intentional understanding of text. The inherent "hallucinations" that occur in the output narratives generated, such as factual inaccuracies or sequential illogicalities associated with established narratives, highlight the profound separation of the AI from human cognition. However, as demonstrated in the case of *"AI Dungeon"* (2019), an interactive narrative fantasy adventure generated through AI conversation models, these limitations may not extend to a decline in reader engagement. Some literary theorists argue that fantasy-based narratives generated through AI form a new genre of literary production, what Porush (2019) calls "alien fiction," with its own aesthetic values and functional structures of interpretation within the narratives.

Ethical Implications of Algorithmic Narratives

The rapid rise of AI storytelling faces some unique ethical questions, most of which the literary field is just beginning to grapple with now—the first concerns intellectual property. AI systems learn from copyrighted work through models that do not compensate authors, as seen in the lawsuits against several AI companies in 2023. Second, there is a general concern about how AI may sustain harmful stereotypes. Research shows that language models amplify existing biases in the data with which they are trained (Bender et al., 2021), which may lead to linkages in generated narratives that reinforce problematic stereotypes.

Perhaps most concerning, however, is that AI could destabilize our shared literary culture. According to Flood (2022), the opaqueness of AI text generation, coupled with its ease-of-use, could produce vast quantities of algorithmically generated narratives and works that render human authors nearly incapable of competing. There is also the potential for "literary deepfakes"—writing attributed to famous authors they did not write, or continuations of stories beloved by readers that the authors disapproved of. Some nations have taken steps to require disclosure of AI authorship of works; however, on a global scale, there is no standard.

Methodological Approaches in the Study of Machine-Generated Text

With traditional methods of literary analysis and assessment being inadequate, researchers in literary studies, now and in the future, must begin to adopt methodologies and research techniques that allow for interdisciplinary collaboration. Researchers must first accommodate the blending of computational assessment with humanistic interpretation—e.g., methods like stylometry to assess machine-generated text for specific features of an AI-generated text (e.g, unusual frequency distribution of words, etc.) alongside close reading to evaluate features of literary quality or aesthetics (Burkhardt, 2023).

Second, researchers must develop assessment methods for AI narratives that operate within their rubric rather than human aesthetic sensibilities. This means looking at things like how specific parameters (e.g., the "temperature" of the narrative [which regulates randomness in generation]) affect narrative coherence or readers' responses to machine-generated authorship versus human authorship. Collaborative works of authorship produced by the "Botnik" collective further support the idea that collaborative or hybrid methods will be fruitful and effective in assessing human-authored texts and a potential response to machine-generated texts.

Finally, the study of AI narratives will require collaboration between humanistic and computational scholars to generate new vocabularies and protocols for research. Programs like Stanford's "Literary Lab" are beginning to model neural networks processing literary features, but much work is needed to develop standard vocabularies and methodologies for research and understanding. As AI develops sophistication, literary studies must develop parallel and rigorous methodologies to assess, better understand, and potentially intervene in this transformative storytelling process.

5. Conclusion

In English literature, the changing narrative reflects wider cultural, technological, and ideological changes. Oral traditions of early storytelling transitioned into printed novels by the 18th century, and now we encounter narrative forms driven by digital and AI technologies. Each change documents the now-mundane and the shifting experiences of humanity, as well as changing 'value' systems in societies. For example, the novel's growth coincided with the rise of individualism and the literate middle class in Britain; the modernist fragmentation of narrative in the early 20th Century resonated with the disillusionment of post-war societies, to name a couple of examples. Contemporary narratives are increasingly decentralized and participatory, influenced by digital platforms, disruptions of postcolonial narratives, and the rise of AI, requiring literary studies to reflect upon their pedagogies.

Digital platforms have democratized narrative production, empowering postcolonial narratives and other marginalized perspectives to expose the Eurocentric literary canon. Writers like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Mohsin Hamid engage with global awareness while upholding local vernacular traditions, compelling and addressing the institutional and systemic biases in literary studies. Emerging trends such as interactive fiction, hypertextual narratives, and social media disrupt linear

narratives, allowing the reader to participate in the story's production and interpretation versus the author's control. Additional trends like video games and transmedia storytelling confront boundary definitions of aesthetic narrated experiences, merging with visual impact and interactive engagement.

Perhaps the most dramatic shift and disruption arises from AI. Not only does AI generate storytelling and narratives, but it also poses questions regarding authorship. It would seem that an algorithm could produce a meaningful piece of writing in the short term and format full-length stories and novels featuring dialogue and narrative, leaving us questioning the limits of human creativity. AI, found within gaming narratives and writing, is increasingly integrated into the story's structure and learning. As a result, educators will be required to consider the implications of these ideas in combination with others: how does AI reshape narrative structure, how does machine learning reframe an experience of a narrative, and can AI literature be considered literature? Further interdisciplinary collaborations are necessary to accurately incorporate other academic disciplines (e.g., literary theory, digital humanities, cognitive science, and postcolonial studies) in considering the development of digital-first narratives. Now we are finding narratives that require planning to accommodate texts that are based outside of traditional forms, and we must explore methodologies of analysis needed to assess how narratives continue to reflect and shape our ever-changing world.

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