Reading Response to *Humans in the Loop* + Experimental Creative Writing

“*Humans in the Loop*” explores the quality of automation of artmaking by artificial intelligence as well as the necessity of human participation in the process. Whether an AI-based algorithm can create art as well and creatively as humans has been a debate topic for more than a decade. In most scenarios, however, the digital and human “artists” rely on vastly different methods to produce art while their output is being judged on the same criteria. For example, I have noticed countless times that a number of “AI music generators” would attempt to perform spectral analysis of input data and resynthesize the sounds with slightly different lyrics and melodies. While some algorithms perform a nice task of fusing multiple elements from input data to generate new content, the output music would commonly have poor audio fidelity regardless of whether the new melody was “better” than the original. In order to truly ask if AI can create art, one would need to train a model that utilizes the same tools that the audio engineers would use: DAW, plugins, hardware audio professors, etc. This approach would provide both AI and humans with the same platform to demonstrate their artistry and compete against each other. This also allows audio engineers to study the techniques of such an AI model since its algorithm is not a black box.

"*Experimental Creative Writing with the Vectorized Word*” by Allison Parrish initially reminded me of Markov chain-based algorithmic composition. This is because a number of artificial intelligence based text generation algorithms predict succeeding words based on both the frequency and similarity of words. I assumed that such an approach was taken to generate a rather meaningless series of sentences. As I watched the presentation, however, I understood that the vectorization of words offered much more potential for creative writing by categorizing words by their appearances in context rather than similarity of meaning. For example, this allows a writer to alter the meaning and tone of a sentence by automatically replacing words without breaking the grammatical structure. The presenter’s consideration and integration of sound in text was another interesting aspect of the presentation. Replacing or adding certain sounds to sentences is an interesting idea to design a form of text delivery. While I think that maintaining the quality of the output text still requires an active participation of human artists, seeing what an analysis of text can do was highly inspiring.