









Usage of AI Tools in the Creation of Trans-Media Works.

Part 1: Disco Elysium: The Movie

This is an example piece for a fan-made film based on the 2019 detective RPG, *Disco Elysium*, created from the ground up using AI generation. Images of the characters being played by real actors have been created using Stable Diffusion, and a script has been created using ChatGPT. This film would be released on a site like YouTube and aimed at both fans of Disco Elysium and those interested in the novelty of these new AI tools.

Character Image	Character Name	Actor	Prompts Used	Final Image
	Evrart Claire, Corrupt Union Boss.	Danny Devito	{Danny Devito} {Frank Reynolds} {Cinematic Style}	
	Harrier "Harry" Du Bois, Amnesiac detective with a substance abuse problem.	Willem Dafoe	{Willem Dafoe} {Creepy grin} {Mutton Chops} {Sideburns} {Sloppy} {Red face} {swollen} {collar} {Open Jacket} {White shirt} {Green Jacket} {sloppy tie} {Creepy grin} {Mutton Chops} {Sideburns} {Sloppy} {Red face} {Cinematic Style}	
			{Willem Dafoe} {green disco blazer} {Mutton chops} {Sideburns} {grin}{red face} {hung over} {office} {detective} {moustache} {Cinematic Style}	
	Kim Kitsuragi, Harry's new, no-nonsense partner from another precinct.	Steven Yeun	{Steven Yeun} {Thick Round Glasses} {Bomber Jacket} {Cinematic Style}	

Images Generated by Stable Diffusion using the SDXL Beta

Prompt (Written by Me)

Give me a script for a Disco Elysium movie. Detective Harry Du Bois and his partner, Kim Kitsuragi, are trying to convince the leader of the Débardeurs' Union, Evrart Claire, to give them information regarding the recent murder of a Private Military Contractor who was investigating the striking workers. Evrart is very slippery and self-interested and is using the investigation to manipulate the Detectives. After getting frustrated at Evrart's evasive answers, Harry attempts to attack him, but Kim holds him back. Harry has recently given himself amnesia by going on a week-long partying spree and is severely hung over. He can barely remember his own name, but is doing his best to solve the case and piece his shattered memory together again. Kim is very straight-laced and by the book. He is loyal to Harry as a fellow detective and is sympathetic to his situation, but seems a little

exhausted by his crazed antics. Opposite sides of the same coin, the two slowly form a bond and play to each other's strengths.

Script (Written by Chat GPT)

FADE IN:

INT. DÉBARDEURS' UNION HEADQUARTERS – DAY

Detective Harry Du Bois and his partner, Kim Kitsuragi, sit across from the leader of the Débardeurs' Union, Evrart Claire. Evrart is a smooth-talking man with a greasy demeanour, and Harry can't help but feel like he's being manipulated.

HARRY: (clearly frustrated) Look, Evrart, we know you've got information on the murder of that PMC. We need to know what you know.

EVART: (smiling) Oh, Detective, you know me. I'm always happy to help the police. But I need something in return.

KIM: (calmly) What do you want, Mr Claire?

EVART: (smiling wider) Just a little favour. You see, there's a shipment of goods coming in that I need help getting through customs. Nothing illegal, mind you. Just a little bureaucratic red tape to cut through.

HARRY: (angrily) We're not here to do your dirty work, Evrart. We're here to solve a murder.

EVART: (coolly) And I'm here to help you do just that. But I need your help first.

Harry's frustration turns to anger, and he stands up abruptly, knocking over his chair.

HARRY: (shouting) I've had enough of your games, Evrart. I'm taking you in.

Kim steps in between Harry and Evrart, holding Harry back.

KIM: (calmly) Let's all just take a step back here. We're not getting anywhere like this.

Harry takes a deep breath, trying to calm down.

HARRY: (to Kim) You're right. I'm sorry. I just can't seem to think straight with this damn hangover.

EVART: (sympathetically) Ah, the party last night was too much for you, Detective? I know the feeling.

Harry looks at Evrart with suspicion.

HARRY: (angrily) What do you know about my partying?

EVART: (smiling) Just a rumor I heard, Detective. Nothing more.

Kim steps in again, trying to defuse the situation.

KIM: (to Evrart): Mr. Claire, we're not here to talk about Harry's personal life. We're here to talk about the murder. Can you help us or not?

EVART: (nodding) Of course, of course. I'll give you everything I know. But first, let's talk about that little favor I need.

Harry and Kim exchange a look, knowing they have no choice but to play along with Evrart's game.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STREETS OF REVACHOL - DAY

Harry and Kim walk down the street, discussing their next move.

KIM: (sighing) That was a disaster.

HARRY: (nodding) Yeah, I know. But we have to play along with Evrart for now. We need his information.

KIM: (shaking his head) I don't like it, Harry. The whole thing feels slimy.

HARRY: (smiling) Welcome to Revachol, Kim. It's all slimy here.

Kim can't help but smile back, despite his reservations.

KIM: (nodding) You're right. So what's the plan now?

HARRY: (thinking) We need to talk to the other workers in the union. See if they know anything about the murder.

KIM: (nodding) And if Evrart finds out?

HARRY: (smiling) We'll cross that bridge when we come

FADE OUT.

Part 2: Analysis

In the opening of “Why Fiske still matters” (Jenkins, 2010), Jenkins discusses Fiske’s apprehension about the effect inventions like the photocopier would have on the media landscape. One wonders how Fiske would respond to the AI tools that have flooded popular discourse in the past few months. In a similar way to how the widespread adoption of photocopiers both revolutionised workplace productivity and created a huge uptick in copyright theft, the creation of these AI tools has made a total reshaping of the media landscape into almost an inevitability, and with this new technology comes a whole host of new “technostruggles” (Fiske, 1996). As such, I feel it is important to look at this piece (and works like it) through a similarly revolutionary lens.

It is my contention that this transmedia text lies not in the theoretical final product but rather in the process of its creation.

AI tools use vastly complicated algorithms to compile thousands of other works across the internet based on a user-generated prompt. The tools have the capacity to learn, and users are able to generate iteratively more complex responses through this process, as well as adding additional context to refine their original prompts. In this way, a user could theoretically create any story they desired. As such, it could be said that the AI tool is its own form of artistic medium, allowing users to sculpt all those petabytes of data into a form that suits their own interests. In this sense, the mere usage of an AI tool is an act of transmedia storytelling, similar but very much distinct from something like, say, a videogame, in which users are able to create their own story within the worlds of other franchises.

Disco Elysium is an open-ended roleplaying game with many different options for the player to approach each situation, but as games become more open-ended, it also becomes easier for players to see the seams where the game’s writers have not accounted for their specific decisions, in a form of what Maj calls “Ludotopian Dissonance” (Maj, 2022). Put simply, the more options a player has to interact with a game’s narrative, the more likely they are to notice all the options they do NOT have. Whilst the scene above is quite similar to a scene that can happen in Disco Elysium, for example, it is impossible to have Harry try to attack Evrart Claire at any point in the game, no matter how badly the player may wish to do so. Using these AI tools, a person can essentially write their own version of any story they like, creating a whole new form of transmedia storytelling with a remarkable degree of flexibility.

Currently, stories created through this method would most often fall under *user-generated content* in Scolari’s model of transmedia storytelling (Scolari, 2009), but there is a significant possibility that, in the not-so-distant future, we may see more media corporations bringing AI tools into the realm of transmedia storytelling. Discussing the film *Reminiscence* (2021) and its accompanying deepfake app, Freeman and Smith wrote; “If the choice to integrate deepfake technology into a commercial piece of Hollywood marketing is in fact predicated on the appeal of stepping inside the world of fiction... it is apparent how this use of AI technology works to rethink science fiction into a form of transmedia wish-fulfilment.” (Freeman & Smith, 2023)

As laid out by Klastrop et al., the three “dimensions” that define a medium are technological, semiotic, and cultural. (KLASTRUP, TOSCA, & Et al., 2014) For the technological dimension, AI tools use servers and code as their mode of production and internet-connected devices (such as smartphones and personal computers) as their material support. In their semiotic dimension, AI tools can take many on many forms, from the use of writing AIs to generate language to Image-based AIs, which generate visual images, to procedurally generated speech creation tools that produce auditive substance. All of these AIs make use of existing, human-generated content to form the basis of their semiotic substance, which may at first render much of their original meaning obsolete, but through the use of prompts these signs and symbols are given new meaning by the user in the same way as a block of clay is meaningless until shaped by a sculptor. The biggest challenge in fitting AI tools into the three dimensions model is currently cultural, as most people currently seem to regard them as merely interdependent with the mediums that they are often used to replicate. It is my feeling that this is largely symptomatic of the relative recency with which these AI tools have hit the mainstream, as well as the often-poor quality of their more primitive iterations. As the usage of these AI tools becomes more widespread, it is likely that the cultural understanding of their potential will also shift.

When assessing the impact of a text like this one, it's important to note the cultural relevance of such a new technology. AI tools have exploded into mainstream popularity in recent months, but it's still too early to know if they will see real widespread adoption or fall by the wayside along with other gimmicky inventions like cryptocurrencies and NFTs. For now, a concept like this is bound to attract audiences through the sheer spectacle of being created by cutting-edge technology, but it will be interesting to see where AI tools go once their 15 minutes of fame are over. Personally, I have a certain level of apprehension over the rise of these tools, as there is a lot of potential for media corporations to use them to cut low-level creatives out of the picture, which in my mind, would be a gross misuse of their potential. With the assertion that AI tools are their own medium comes the implicit understanding of their use as an addition to already existing art forms, not a replacement for them.

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