

## **Friend or Foe: AI Imaginaries in Youth Narratives**

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The widespread adoption and application of artificial intelligence (AI) in everyday life have raised grave concerns about its use and misuse, opportunities and threats, as well as its impacts on various users. Popular debates are often framed in two opposing discourses. The utopian perspectives celebrate the great potential of AI in providing solutions to a wide range of problems. The dystopian views are wary of such developments, fearing that AI might jeopardize human beings in the long run. The present study examines this “friend or foe” thesis through a narrative analysis of stories written by 106 high school students and university students in Hong Kong and China. Unlike interviews and focus group discussion, narrative analysis invites participants to tell and retell their “lived experiences” in the form of narratives. Participants in this study were asked to tell “a story about AI and me”. The open-ended approach encourages the participants to decide on a most important and relevant story to share regarding their use of AI, which has quickly become the default application in their digital devices. In constructing their narratives, they reveal the settings in which they use AI, discuss their interactions with AI in the format of a plot, and describe AI as a character. In this study, this youth-centred and interpretive method enables us to discover and uncover meanings embedded in narratives, shedding light on how younger AI users feel, assume and experience artificial intelligence. These AI imaginaries are critical for informing policy formulation and advancing AI literacy education.