

Examining Vincent van Gogh Through Generative AI: Accuracy and Interpretation



Course: HUMN303N-61626 – Introduction to Humanities

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The purpose of this assignment was to use a generative AI program to conduct a simulated interview with the artist Vincent van Gogh and then evaluate the accuracy of the information provided. Generative AI can be a productive learning tool, but it is also prone to errors or invented details. To assess the reliability of the AI-generated responses, each statement was compared with scholarly sources and historical documentation regarding van Gogh's artistic influences, stylistic development, personal history, major works, and artistic legacy.

Artistic Influences

In the interview, the AI depicted van Gogh as being heavily influenced by Rembrandt, Jean-François Millet, and the French Impressionists, including Monet and Pissarro. These assertions are accurate. Van Gogh openly admired the emotional depth and use of light in Rembrandt's work. His respect for Millet is well-documented; Millet's depictions of rural labor strongly resonated with van Gogh's empathy for working-class subjects. When van Gogh moved to Paris in 1886, he encountered the Impressionists and adopted their brighter palette and broken brushstroke technique.

Historical and Personal Context

The AI interview emphasized van Gogh's emotional struggles and his time in Arles as formative to his artistic expression. This is historically accurate. Van Gogh's letters describe his lifelong battles with mental illness, loneliness, and the desire for human connection. His period in Arles (1888–1889) was one of his most productive, marked by intense color and expressive composition.