

EXPLORING DUALISM OF AI AND CREATIVITY IN LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Since advent of AI, there has been major transformation in the society. Most importantly, AI is changing the rules of game and has been affecting each and every area of life. From this sweeping change, literature can not escape. This paper critically examines challenges posed by AI in the domain of literature. Furthermore, it argues that it is very difficult for AI to replicate human creativity. Given AI's vast powers, it can present copied and curated literature. Most significantly, this paper attempts to locate AI in capitalist universality and draws attention to impending digital divide by pointing out at resource driven data politics. This paper concludes by reflecting on revolutionary role of literature in AI dominated world.

Keywords: transformation, curated literature, capitalist universality, revolutionary

Literature, since time immortal, has been a guiding light for the humanity. Across the time and space, it has faced many existential challenges which have transformed very nature of the literature. From fighting censorship to embracing death, literature has defied all limitations of human morality and mortality. With new epoch, comes new challenge as society has been passing through gyre of the evolution. In addition to this, new challenges enforce literature to become more relevant and suitable to needs of the contemporary times. Historically speaking, literature is resilient because it managed to domesticate all these challenges in various forms. By embracing innovation and new paradigms, literature has managed to stay alive and thriving. But the challenge of AI is very different than earlier ones. This research paper attempts to understand relation between AI and literature from the literary and critical perspective.

Conceptually speaking, creativity is the soul of literature and this creativity is an outcome of the imagination. Most importantly, this very imagination is humane, organic and living. One can feel it. Due to this humane and organic imagination, literature is able to humanize living

experience and expectations. Based on the foundations of humanizing mission, literature has endeavored to transform animal kingdom into kingdom of God. But coming of AI has disturbed this cardiac rhythm of literature. Philosophically speaking, the objective of AI to maximize the mechanization of human life. In short, it aims to dehumanize living and lived experience. In simple words, humanity, in AI dominated world, would lead AI choreographed mechanical life. Embellished in such kind of mechanical life, human life would not be humane but robotic, devoid of any feelings. Never before in human history, such kind of situation was existed. Therefore, the task of literature is very challenging and demanding and very existence of humanity depends on literature's resurrection of lived experience in contemporary age. The relationship between AI and literature is very complicated and the very dynamics of this relationship is going to shape our collective future.

Since days of the industrial revolution, manual labor has been getting replaced by the machine labor and this process has created some kind of surplus income and time for individuals to enjoy the art. Due to this reason, art and artist were able to break feudal patronage system and have brought sea change not only in the realm of entertainment but also in general human life by embracing new themes and radical modes of representation. But with coming of AI, there is a kind of new challenge for art and artist. Unlike earlier challenges, this challenge is very complicated and would require Herculean efforts on the parts of humanity to pass this ordeal.

Aesthetically speaking, the primary function of literature is to give pleasure and secondary function is related to the domain of moral instruction. In brief, teaching through delight. Given the special talent of artist, the creation and production of art is the only privilege of selected few. According to English critic S. T. Coleridge, primary imagination is universal and secondary imagination is very rare, only available to the artist. He in his book, *Biographia Literaria* (1817) argues,

"The Imagination then I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary Imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception... The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will... It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate..."

With the help of this secondary imagination, writers are able to create literary works and have been inspiring generations across time and space.

Having witnessed the rapid growth of AI in recent times, there is challenge to the secondary imagination of the artist. It seems, on the surface level, that AI has been levelling playing field between primary and secondary imagination by empowering lay persons as creators. No doubt, one would call it as process of democratization in the domain of literary production system. To paraphrase words of Lyotard, Jean-François, AI, like postmodernism has

mechanically ended the ‘grand narrative of literary creation’. But deeper structure tells different story. There is serious question about AI curated literature. The use of curated literature is deliberate and tries to draw our attention to the very genesis of such kind of literature. Philosophically speaking, can we call it as creative literature or copy- paste literature? In creative literature, artist pours his or her soul, blood and sweat. Opposite to this, AI empties out algorithms, devoid of any feelings.

The anatomy of literary creation is all about feelings and has been originated from the deep reserves from human unconscious. In this domain, even chaotic elementary forces of irrationality operate rationally. But AI is product of rationality, an ultimate manifestation of the ‘instrumental reason’ which is celebrated by ethos of Enlightenment. Most importantly, the reason speaks in language of capitalism which is completely opposed to organic life due to its genetic penchant for commodification of every aspect of human life. Therefore, it is very important to locate the critique of AI in background of advanced late capitalism. Furthermore, one has to understand implications arising due to the digital divide. Considering all these factors, one could claim that AI curated literature would not be organic and it would not have revolutionary urge and radicalism as it is controlled by the logic of late advanced capitalism.

Art, since time immortal, is celebrated for its originality and creativity. Most importantly, Russian formalist has analyzed the effect of defamiliarization while articulating poetics of pleasure. Conceptually speaking, AI curated literature is all about repetition, lacking authenticity and originality. If Plato was condemning literature as copy of copy, thrice removed from the reality then how we are going to locate AI curated literature in theory of imitation? Moreover, AI could be all except original. It means that AI curated literature would be far away from the reality. Even if it has represented reality ever, that reality would be mechanical or robotic reality. By following ‘capitalist universality’ and logic, AI curated literature becomes mechanical performance, prompted by prompt to be seductive instrument of the primitive capitalist accumulation. For AI, there is hardly any difference between data and art. But for humanity, art is life, full of possibilities. In short, AI would produce copy of copies but it would be very difficult to replicate human originality in the domain of art.

To probe the anatomy of literary creation, one has to understand different aspects of creative art. According to T. S. Eliot, the artist can feel the thought and therefore, he praised metaphysical poets for their unification of thought and emotion in their poetry. He, in his essay, ‘The Metaphysical Poets’ points out,

“Tennyson and Browning are poets, and they think; but they do not feel their thought as immediately as the odour of a rose. A thought to Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility. When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience...”

For making of good literature, one has to feel the thought. In literature, there is wedding of thought and feeling. Due to this reason, art can please and preach simultaneously. On the contrary, AI curated literature, there is disharmony between thought and feeling as it is based on rational method of operation. In simpler words, it would not be lively like creative literature. Furthermore, it would be more formulistic and predictable. Unlike human creativity, AI cannot feel its own thought. Hence, all these limitations on the part of AI would make AI specialist only in curated literature.

One of the most beautiful things about literature is its dynamism and evolving nature. In simpler words, literature has been changing with times. With change in social structures and production system, literature has devised new genres and innovative methods of the representation to capture the essence of reality in order to make it comprehensible for readers. Only human mind can understand and feel the correlation between text and context. Furthermore, humans can connect different dots and create everlasting work of art. That's why we have many types and forms of literature and these things have made literature relevant all time. This is, no doubt, strength of literature that has made it as master very forces of evolution. Practically speaking, AI could produce tons of themes and characters through robotic operations but how it is going to create new forms or genres of literature? By observing all limitations of AI, one could assume that AI would not be able to create new forms and themes in the literature. Creatively speaking, the challenge of AI would make artists more creative and original. Most importantly, there would be a bumper crop of new themes and literary forms in literature due to challenge of AI. This change would be qualitative and quantitative in both terms; paving way for higher forms and themes in literature. Most significantly, one could assume that AI is going to enrich literature by challenging the depth of human imagination and creativity.

Though AI is blessed with tremendous power, there is still a certain limitation for AI. In the area, this limitation is very significant. Moreover, the successful characterization is prerequisite for good work of art. To put simply, one cannot imagine literary work without referring its characterization due to omnificence of characters in the literary work. Discussing about variety of characters in literatures is like counting stars in the sky due to its infinite nature and depth. In his famous book, 'An Aspects of Novel' (1917), E. M. Forster had categorized 'flat' and 'round' characters. According to him, flat characters are static, predictable while round characters are dynamic and unpredictable. Practically speaking, one cannot have literature without characters. Moreover, creating immortal characters like Hamlet, Elizabeth Bennet, Heathcliff, is not easy task. It requires almost divine capabilities and competence to sketch such kinds of characters in their glorious details of blood, tear and

sweat. Due to their heroism and inherent goodness, literature becomes inspiring and carries legacy of our civilization.

While speaking about the art of successful characterization, one cannot neglect the limitation of AI curated literature. For AI, it is almost impossible to create characters like Hamlet or other famous characters due to their emotional complexity and depth. Realistically speaking, there is possibility of AI creating more of flat characters than round characters that are very important from the literary point of view. While AI can create infinite number of characters but it would be very difficult for AI to infuse these characters with psychological depth and energy as artists do in their respective literary works. Unless you have successful characterization, you can not catch the attention of readers. Hence, the lack of proper characterization or its genetic inability to fathom out the emotional complexity of individual, makes AI curated literature rather dull and less interesting as compared to literary works composed by writers. In short, for AI, Literature is and will remain final frontier to conquer.

Philosophically speaking, the aesthetics of literature is not only about the poetics of pleasure which offers ecstasies and epiphanies endlessly to escape from the absurdity of human existence. But more than that, literature is all about the spiritual evolution of individuals, leading onto the path of an ultimate liberation and salvation. While there is all ever compassing mechanization of human body, mind and very existence in the age of Fourth industrialization which is undisputedly lead by AI, the literature becomes an existential necessity for our well being and very survival. In the initial part of this paper, we have come across the link between AI and Capitalist universality. Given the recent developments in the field of AI, there is genuine concern about digital divide between center and periphery. Historically speaking, the paradigm of industrial revolution was employed to colonize periphery. Similarly, there is possibility of the return of empire through domination of AI. As most of these companies are western multinational companies like East India company of previous era. Furthermore, in this new Avatar of neo colonization, data is new resources like famed Indian cotton of colonial times to be exploited and commodified. Strategically speaking, battle for data would endanger our national security and existence.

If AI is an integral part of the capitalist universality, literature has to make itself as an element of progressive universality to lead revolutionary forces of the periphery. Once again, literature has to humanize our existence as AI relentlessly is attempting to mechanize our life. In this regression of robotic repetition of large scale, Literature has to breathe new spirit and energy in our life by creating new forms and methods of articulation to rationalize our existence. Humanly speaking, literature is the only solace to tormented and tortured soul form incessant objectification of human life.

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