

On the Significance of Poetry in ChatGPT Era

YANG Dongli

Shandong University, Jinan, China

ChatGPT is essentially a technical tool. However, unlike the previous technical tools, it is more anthropomorphic and can be taken as another deepening of application of digital technology in human life. Its advantages are beyond all doubt. Its deeper limitation and possible harm lie in that it will alienate natural people's thinking and psychology of receiving world information, to certain extent. To overcome the new split between rationality and sensibility brought by ChatGPT, we need stronger and more independent natural creativity of human beings, and poetry is the best way to cultivate this creativity of human beings. There are three ways for poetic thinking to strengthen human creativity: creatively understand and use content of the dialogue with ChatGPT with poetic thinking; integrate poetic thinking and machine thinking; have to create a new way of thinking in the era of ChatGPT, by transcending machine thinking through poetic thinking.

Keywords: ChatGPT, technology, poetry, poetic thinking, machine thinking

Introduction

On November 30th, 2022, Open AI released its own chat robot program ChatGPT. In the name of ChatGPT, Chat means chat, and GPT is the abbreviation of Generic Pre-trained Transformer, which refers to converter with production capacity for pre-training. It connects a huge corpus through transformer neural network architecture. These corpora basically contain all kinds of information in the real world. ChatGPT can conduct highly simulated human-to-human dialogue with humans. In addition, it can also write emails, with writing video scripts, writing compositions, translating foreign literature, and writing codes. Its conversational ability and moral standards are far superior to those of similar products, and it quickly became popular on social media once it was launched. By the end of January 2023, ChatGPT's monthly active users have exceeded 100 million, becoming the fastest growing consumer product in history.

Essence and Limitations of ChatGPT

ChatGPT is essentially a technical tool. However, unlike the previous technical tools, it is more anthropomorphic and can be taken as another deepening of the application of digital technology in human life. The anthropomorphic evolution of technological tools seems to be the trend of human history. Since the machine revolution that strongly transformed nature in modern times, technical tools no longer seem to be satisfied with being driven by people. The birth of digital technology in the 1940s and the emergence of each important node of development both demonstrated the desire of technological tools to approach human capabilities, to have an equal dialogue with human beings and even to surpass human capabilities: The original computer is imitation of human brain, also known as electric brain, but it can perform 5,000 addition operations or 400 multiplication

operations per second, and the computing speed is thousands of times faster than human brain. Since then, the Internet has connected the network of every computer in the world through a universal protocol, trying to realize the rapid connection of global information. The Internet has created a virtual world that imitates the real world. Humans can realize natural communication across physical space. This has promoted the personification of technology. However, the Internet is not the personification of technology itself. After the Internet, another node in the development of digital technology is artificial intelligence (AI). Artificial intelligence is a milestone in the anthropomorphic development of technology itself. AI attempts to understand the essence of human intelligence and produce intelligent machines that are capable of simulating human beings in all aspects, such as thinking, emotion, and practice. It includes robot, language recognition system, image recognition system, natural language processing system, expert system, etc. Therefore, AI is not limited to the simulation of the independent working ability of natural people, but also tries to conduct natural dialogue and communication with natural people in human manner. ChatGPT was born in response to the demand of AI. Its core function and selling point are to have a highly realistic interpersonal dialogue with natural people. The personification of technical tools has reached an unprecedented peak here at ChatGPT. It is in this sense that ChatGPT is known as an epoch-making revolution in the development of human society. The era it created is called “AGI (Artificial General Intelligence) era, that is, the era of general artificial intelligence” (Ling, Wang, & Yuan, 2023).

The advantage of ChatGPT is that it trains and strengthens human feedback learning for a certain field of knowledge through human-computer dialogue, that is, human question, machine answer and machine question, man answer. ChatGPT has rich and massive text data from books, articles, and websites, which can be used as a depth model to assist humans in learning knowledge in a certain field. However, its limitations are also obvious: It can only generate text based on the given data, and cannot understand the rich high context and implicit meaning between words and symbols; it cannot answer questions other than training data; in addition, it sometimes generates offensive or even fabricated statements. However, this is only a superficial limitation. Its deeper limitation and possible harm lie in that it will alienate natural people’s thinking and psychology of receiving world information, to certain extent. This alienation actually stems from the superhuman ability of technical tools while being personified. This superhuman ability will strengthen and amplify the instrumental characteristics of human reason, split the original fusion of human sense and reason, and cause the alienation of human thinking and psychology. Nevertheless, personification is still the leading factor in the development of technological tools, because the superhuman character of technological tools implies the psychological needs of human beings to create enhanced versions of human beings through development of technological tools. However, it is an indisputable fact that the superhuman character in the development of technological tools will alienate the thinking and psychology of natural people. The superhuman character brought by technological tools does not necessarily completely eliminate human perception and make human thinking completely mechanized, but it will make people lose the link between perception and deep thinking and make their perception and feeling simple. This is also an important manifestation of the split between human perception and rationality. However, this split will be overcome by stages with the establishment of a harmonious relationship between human life and machines, that is, the establishment of what Marx called “humanized nature”. “The nature formed through industry—albeit in the form of alienation—is a real and humanistic nature” (Marx & Engels, 2009, p. 193). However, the emergence of new technological tools will destroy the integration of sense and reason again, and look forward to the re-establishment of the harmonious relationship between human life and technological tools. Alienation began in the era of machine revolution. The technological development from big machines to computers to Internet to

artificial intelligence follows this rule. ChatGPT is also in the operating range of this law. It will separate human rationality and sensibility, which have been healed in internet era, and make people fall into a new and more difficult to overcome alienation. This alienation is embodied in the fact that ChatGPT's massive knowledge reserves will shock the psychology of people who talk with it, make them rely on it subconsciously, and then be dominated by ChatGPT's machine thinking in thinking. Then, another split between reason and sensibility has come into being. To overcome the coming new division, we need stronger and more independent natural creativity of human beings. Poetry is the best way to cultivate this creativity of human beings.

Function of Poetry

Poetry is a very old art of mankind. Generally speaking, human beings have poetry since they can make sounds. It was originally embodied as meaningful music, and later expressed in writing symbols and became poetry. It is mainly used to help people express their inner feelings and maintain the connection between human subjects and their own internal and external nature. This kind of connection is summarized by Confucius as "poetry can be created (Xing), observed (Guan), grouped (Qun), and resented (Yuan)" (He & Xing, 2000, p. 270), which means that poetry can cultivate spirit and sentiment, and stimulate people's inner vitality; it can examine the gains and losses of social politics; it can communicate feelings in human groups; we can criticize the mistakes of the rulers. Among them, "Xing" means that poetry can maintain the connection between human subjects and their internal natural psychology; "Guan, Qun and Yuan" means that poetry can maintain the connection between human subjects and their external natural environment. What poetry can do is that it conforms to the natural nature of the integration of human subjective sense and reason. Because of this characteristic of poetry, poetry can be used as a prophecy to look forward to and influence the future in the witchcraft era when it believes that "all things have spirits", and can also be used as a religious ceremony to praise the gods, expel demons, and defeat diseases. In the letter to Schelling, Holderlin also called poetry a living art derived from genius, experience, and reflection (Tian, 2021). It will lead people into a mythical state of perfect integration of the spirit of freedom and the natural laws of the world. This mythical state helps people transcend the forced unity of reality constrained by machinery and necessity, and reach a higher connection between people and the world. This higher connection helps to maintain the connection between human subject and nature that human beings have had since ancient times, and can maintain the nature of human beings as a whole of sense and reason as a natural person in any era and context.

Way of Poetic Thinking Strengthening Creativity in ChatGPT Era

In the era of ChatGPT, poetry is mainly a way to help strengthen human creativity through poetic thinking. Vico also called poetic thinking poetic wisdom. He interpreted it as a kind of thinking that stimulates the creative ability of human ancestors. "First humans were poets" (Zhou, 2014). It reflects on life in an intuitive form, with strong sensory color, creativity, imagination, transcendence, and integrity. These characteristics clearly reflect the connection between human subject and nature, and correspond to the nature of the integration of human subject's sense and reason. In the era of ChatGPT, there are three ways for poetic thinking to strengthen human creativity: firstly, creatively understand and use the content of dialogue with ChatGPT with poetic thinking. In the era of the Internet, the Internet is only a technical tool for communication between natural persons, and the terminal of communication between natural persons is still natural person. In the era of ChatGPT, ChatGPT was further personified and became the object of dialogue and communication between natural people. It is easy to imply to natural people in a sense that ChatGPT and natural people are equal in mind and other aspects, and can

deeply communicate and influence each other. In fact, ChatGPT will not be affected in the dialogue and communication with natural persons, and only natural persons can be affected. Therefore, natural people are naturally in danger of being domesticated by ChatGPT machine thinking and re-entering the split state of sense and reason. The poetic thinking provided by poetry can help natural people understand the dialogue with ChatGPT from a higher level of connection between people and the world, so that people can always maintain the dominant position of distinct distinction between natural people and ChatGPT, when communicating with ChatGPT, avoiding the more domesticated machine thinking brought by ChatGPT, and then controlling and creatively understanding and using the content of the dialogue with ChatGPT.

Secondly, combine poetic thinking with machine thinking. Many scholars believe that machine thinking is an objective reality and should not be completely rejected. Since ChatGPT hopes to achieve equal dialogue with human beings, it can also have equal dialogue with ChatGPT. We do not need to use poetic thinking to completely control the content of the conversation with ChatGPT. We can try to use poetic thinking to stimulate the creativity of ChatGPT's machine thinking and make the machine thinking caused by ChatGPT deeply anthropomorphic. Deep anthropomorphic machine thinking can be used to imagine the future of science and technology and the impact of social development on human beings, and then create new things. In this way, man-machine cooperation can be formed to create a harmonious aspect in the future. The creation of science fiction works in the era of ChatGPT may become the training of human creativity in this era.

Thirdly, transcend machine thinking through poetic thinking and create a new way of thinking in the era of ChatGPT. This attempt is neither to use poetic thinking to control machine thinking, nor to integrate poetic thinking with machine thinking, but to analyze and criticize ChatGPT's machine thinking through poetic thinking, distinguish its advantages and disadvantages, and then extract the advantages of ChatGPT's machine thinking, and integrate it with poetic thinking. This can update the poetic thinking of the ChatGPT era, so that it can not only retain the function of connecting human subjects with nature, but also bear the characteristics of the ChatGPT era. This will even lead to the birth of anti-ChatGPT technology.

Conclusion

No matter which way, poetic thinking is helping to restore the natural subject of human beings and maintain the connection between human subjects and their own internal and external nature. The aura proposed by Benjamin and the aura advocated by Chinese classical poetics are the external temperament of human natural subject's poetic thinking. "Aura is not a phenomenon or energy that all things naturally appear, but an induction between people and all things" (Meng, 2019). Therefore, ChatGPT should not be praised blindly. We should be fully aware of its defects and possible hazards. ChatGPT, neither, can be completely regarded as a monster. Although ChatGPT has many powerful superhuman functions, its current momentum also includes capital for value-added purposes and the United States for political purposes. Moreover, although some people think it will replace some industries and make many people lose their jobs in the past, it can also create new industries and cultivate new practitioners with the characteristics of ChatGPT era. Of course, this kind of creation should be carried out on the premise that human beings use poetic thinking to strengthen creativity. In a word, in the era of ChatGPT, what poetry should do is to help mankind build up strong and independent natural creativity that is suitable for this era again, bridge another split between rationality and sensibility, enable mankind to continue to maintain the connection between human subject and internal and external nature, and reintroduce human society into the track of harmonious development.

References

- He, Y. Z., & Xing, B. S. (2000). *Commentary on the Analects of Confucius, collation of the commentary on the Thirteen Classics*. Beijing: Peking University Press.
- Ling, X. X., Wang, D. M., & Yuan, J. (2023). Cold thoughts on science and technology ethics and academic ethics after the ChatGPT explosion. *Journal of Xinjiang Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 44(2), 145-158.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (2009). *Collected works of Marx and Engels (Volume I)*. Beijing: People's Publishing House.
- Meng, F. X. (2019). The occurrence of aura: A new exploration of Benjamin's art theory. *National Arts*, 35(1), 98-108.
- Tian, Y. (2021). The unity of beauty and truth in Holderlin's existential poetics. *Journal of China University for Political Science and Law*, 15(3), 266-273.
- Zhou, Y. Y. (2014). Poetic wisdom and poetry—An analysis of Vico's poetic thoughts. *Popular Literature and Art*, 59(19), 38-39.