

Artificial Intelligence and Literature- The Future of Two Unlikely but Inextricably Connected Areas

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Abstract: Literature has been an indispensable part of human expression. The literature and computer science are not as far from each other as it appears. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is unquestionably evolving and its contribution in the field of literature can be immense. It has been observed by many researchers that AI has the capability to play a critical a key role in literary world, whether it is literary interpretation, or literary criticism. AI-aided translation is one such area of humanities where a lot of developments has been done. Over the years, there has been different forms of literature that has evolved. There was an era when narrative was told through lengthy epic poetry, and there was also a time when novels into prominence. Translation had always played a key role in every era, of connecting two different languages, cultures and literatures. And now AI could play an important role in breaking the language barrier. This paper is an attempt to understand the relation of literature and AI, and how these two areas in future, can make a different in the academia.

Keywords: *Literature, Artificial Intelligence, Human Agency, Translation*

I. INTRODUCTION

The society has always been under evolution. From stone and wood to industrialization, electricity and the internet, humanity has seen many changes. This era is an age of development of science and technology. It won't be wrong to say that the primary function of the development of science and technology is to serve humanity. But as Gerd Leonhard in his new book titled 'Technology vs Humanity', says that "The world is entering an era of truly transformative change. Tremendous potential lies in these exponential technological advances, yet with these new opportunities also come tremendous new responsibilities. A combinatory set of 'science and technology enabled megashifts' are coming together that will redraw not only literature, culture and society but also our biology and our lives. An avalanche of technological changes will reshape the very essence of humanity and touch every aspect of life of our planet." (Leonhard 2016).

II. LITERATURE AND TRANSLATION

Literature has been an indispensable part of human expression. Translation has a key role to play in that. It becomes a bridge between different cultural settings. Translation is a medium through which thoughts could cross the barrier of language. Through this medium a piece of literature is able to reach audience faraway from its origin into a new cultural linguistic space. Interestingly, this process of translation also becomes the part of a larger political and cultural construct. Translation is a transfer of meaning from a language to another, but also a transfer of culture and politics. As Bassnett quotes Lefevere "Translation is not just a window opened on another world, or some such pious platitude. Rather, translation is a channel opened, often not without a certain reluctance, through which foreign influences can penetrate the native culture, challenge it and even contribute in subverting it". (Bassnett 1980). Translation cannot be considered as an innocent act. It could be used as a strategy that is consciously employed, either to promote a political ideology or to impede a certain kind of ideology through the manipulation of certain themes and metaphors. State plays an important and decisive role in it. Translator self-censors the text depending on how state censorship would react, and how the subject fits in national discourse and cultural identities of the audience. In short, the text is contextualized as per the different linguistic-temporal-cultural contexts. Interestingly all this is not there when a machine translates.

The understanding of translation could not just come by analyzing a rewritten text, but it comes through the lingua- and socio-cultural aspects which effect the translation process. Susan Bassnett has precisely said what translation is all about;

"Writing does not happen in a vacuum, it happens in a context and the process of translating texts from one cultural system into another is not a neutral, innocent, transparent activity. Translation is instead a highly charged, transgressive activity, and the politics of translation and translating deserve much greater attention than has been paid in the past" (Bassnett 1980)

III. LITERATURE AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The term Artificial intelligence, at first sight appears simple, that it is about the intelligence which is demonstrated by computer machines. James Vincent believes that it is a difficult term to define. Ben Coppin also says that AI is systems that work in a way that

These examples show us an overview of current machine translations. The first translation 1.1 is able to convey the meaning, except in the last line, "that further outdoor exercise was now out of the question" is being translated too literally. Still we can say it is very close. The lines from *To Kill a Mockingbird* given in 1.2 are simple in nature. Although the translation is a little blurredly and is not able to convey the exact meaning. However, 1.3's translation is such which is confusing. Morrison who expresses the horrors of slavery in her writing, is not being able to be reflected in the translation. 1.4 and 1.5 are written by Shakespeare. If phrases like follow my mother was taught to machine, then more or less the translation would have been able to convey the meaning. 1.5 shows us how even human translation differs from one to other. The same word has been translated differently.

VI. CONCLUSION

AI researcher Eliezer Yudkowsky observed that "By far the greatest danger of Artificial Intelligence, is that people conclude too early that they understand it." It is a vast field, with endless scope. It can be useful in so many areas, and literature is one of it. As discussed above if algorithms are properly created and a clear structure is being given to computer system, AI can play a key role in literary interpretation, as well as literary criticism. These algorithms can certainly tell critical information about reading pattern, and narrative structure. AI's role in translation is something quite evident. Machine Translation is a field which has been extensively used, and its future appears positive. Simon Davies in his article titled '*Artificial Intelligence Is Changing The Translation Industry. But Will It Work?*' observed that "AI is breaking the language barrier and AI can be as precise as a human translator in future." (Davies 2018). The only thing that all the scholars suggest is that AI Translation need human intervention, humans who can not only correct the wrong translations but also help to *teach* AI. Artificial intelligence company 'Unbabel' recently devoted \$23 million of funding for developing machine translation. AI will unquestionably evolve as time goes by, still, human will have an important place in effective implementation. The key in computer science is algorithms and proper instructions, and if we focus on developing in a way which associate with literature, it can certainly change the course of the academia.

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