

LITERARY STUDY IN THE ERA OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN CHINA

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Abstract

In view of the salient characteristics of technological innovation and human-machine symbiosis in the era of artificial intelligence, Chinese literary circles have purveyed a productive exploration of “literary study in the era of artificial intelligence.” Chinese scholars’ innovation of literary theory consists of three characteristics. First, they have established the original theory of “brain text,” systematically analyzed the definition, formation mechanism, and relationship between “brain text” and literature, language, text, and cognition, and applied this theory to literary criticism. Second, on the basis of sorting out and summarizing the core viewpoints of Western digital humanities theory, Chinese scholars have carried out indigenized innovations, promoted the research of machine reading in digital humanities, and proposed the paradigm of online literary criticism. Third, Chinese scholars have accepted and promoted the posthuman theory of Western academic circles, thereupon formulating independent critical discourses by means of classification, distinction, and selection. Chinese scholars’ innovation of literary criticism is reflected in the following aspects. They continue to promote ethical literary criticism, paying closer attention to environmental ethics, biotechnology ethics, and robot ethics. At the same time, they have expanded the issues of literary criticism from the dimensions of body and emotion, focusing on such novel topics as virtual body, new subject, artificial emotion, and non-human narrative. They have also explored the generative mechanism, nature, limitations, and potentials of AI literature.

Keywords

AI literature, “brain text” theory, Chinese literary study, ethical literary criticism, posthuman theory

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INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to an artificial system that canvasses the laws of human intellectual activities and constructs computational procedures with human intelligence. Its research focuses are to explore and expose the laws and characteristics of human consciousness, self, and mind, to formulate basic theories, methods, and technologies that simulate human intellectual behaviors like learning, reasoning, thinking, and planning with computers, and to manufacture computers with the intelligent properties of the human brain. The era of AI, broadly conceived, is strikingly characterized by technological innovation and human-computer symbiosis. With the rapid development of high and new technologies such as bioengineering, genetic engineering, cloning technology, and big data analysis, sci-tech innovations and humanities have been intertwined with each other in an inextricable interdisciplinary linkage, thereby stimulating and spawning new humanistic theories and literary criticism.

The development of artificial intelligence has an inherent affinity with that of literary writing and criticism. Literature, with human emotion, consciousness, self, and other life characteristics as the objects of expression, is essentially the representation of “human intelligence.” It differs from “artificial intelligence” in that literature relies on experience, perception, and imagination rather than science and technology, and the medium of expression of literature is language rather than material manufacturing. Literature has long presented imaginative depictions of “artificial intelligence” and probed into the problems it may pose through science fiction. Literary study, with its purpose of reflection and critique, has always paid close attention to the depiction of “artificial intelligence” in literary works and actively explored literary theory and criticism in the era of AI.

It seems that the Chinese scholarship, compared with the Western world, is more preoccupied with literature’s position *sui generis* in the new era and primed to reinvestigate the theoretical and practical gamut of literary study.¹ In recent years, Chinese literary critics have conducted quite a few researches on the issue of “literary study in the era of artificial intelligence” and achieved many innovative results. Here comes an overview.

INNOVATION AND ADVANCEMENT OF LITERARY THEORY

AI's intervention into the literary field necessitates, before anything else, a revolution in literary theories that undergird subsequent critical practices. Several international journals—among them *New Literary History*, *Critical Inquiry*, and *CLCWeb*—have partaken in this revolution and displayed Western scholars' continuous concern for humanities computing and literary narrativity.² By contrast, in China, there is a tendency for initiating new terms at once interacting with Western literary theories. More specifically, in the context of the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence and the in-depth study of the human brain, Chinese scholars have pioneered the original theory of “brain text,” which not only speaks to the unique distinction of human brain distinguished from artificial intelligence, but also brings forth a batch of contemplations on the thinking mechanism of human brain in the literary field. At the same time, on the basis of Western digital humanities and posthuman critical theories, Chinese scholars have made an indigenized reinterpretation and a constructive expansion thereon from the perspective of Chinese culture.

BRAIN TEXT THEORY

“Brain text” theory was proposed by Chinese scholar Nie Zhenzhao. Since 2013, Nie has published a series of essays on “brain text” in many important Chinese journals, systematically proposing and analyzing the definition and generating mechanism of “brain text” and its correlations with literature, language, text, and cognition. In “Ethical Literary Criticism: Oral Literature and Brain Text,” he proposes the definition of “brain text” and clarifies that it is the origin of literature:

Brain text, in its biological form, preserves human beings' experience of perception and cognition through memory. Before the invention of written symbols, there appeared a wide array of brain texts with literary characteristics, such as myth, heroic epics, folk tales, and historical narratives. Brain text is the prototype of the text of oral literature, yet it is not hereditary and can only be passed down orally from one generation to another.
(8)

“The Forming Mechanism of Brain Text and Brain Concept in Theory of Ethical Literary Criticism” offers a detailed analysis of “brain text” and its important value:

Brain text consists of brain concepts, which, by the different sources, can be divided into objective concepts and abstractive concepts. Brain concepts are tools for thinking while thought comes from thinking by understanding and application of brain concepts. Brain text is the carrier of thought. The termination of the synthesis of brain concepts

signifies the completion of thinking, which produces thoughts to form brain text. Brain text determines thinking and behavioral patterns that not only communicate and spread information, but also decide man's ideas, thoughts, judgments, choices, actions, and emotions. (26)

In "Redefining Language as Brain Text and Based on Saussure's Views," Nie examines the relationship between "brain text" and language and character: "Language is the sound form of brain text and character is the written form of brain text" (5). "On Brain Text and Language Generating" elucidates the basic methods of expression of "brain text": "Brain text is presented through oral expression with human vocal organs and through writing symbols" (115). "Ethical Mechanism of Language Generation" reveals the relation between "brain text" and language generation: "The process when brain text is transformed into the form of sound coincides with the generation of language" (87). In "On Human Cognition and Consciousness," Nie investigates the connection between "brain text" and cognition: "Brain text is not the terminal stage of human cognition, but rather the beginning of a new cognitive stage" (91).

The "brain text" theory lays a solid foundation for Nie's more extensive theorization on textual theory and ethical literary criticism. It is disparate from cognitive poetics proposed by Western scholars to interpret literary texts with the aid of textual world theory and cognitive science. Rather, it falls into Nie's classification of three literary textual forms: "brain texts with the brain as the vehicle, written texts with written materials as the vehicle, and electronic texts (or digital texts) with electronic media as the vehicle" ("Value Choice and the Theoretical Construction" 79).³ The "brain text" theory, to some extent, can be considered as a counteractive against the welter of digital texts in the era of AI.

Nie's "brain text" theory creates a new theoretical perspective for literary criticism in the era of AI. Chinese scholars have applied this theory to literary research to decipher the generative mechanism of literary creation. Shang Biwu, Su Hui, and Ren Jie have each published articles to dissect literary works by virtue of this theory. In "The Conflict between Scientific Selection and Ethical Selection: Artificial Intelligence and Brain Text in Ian McEwan's *Machines Like Me*," Shang points out, with reference to "brain text" theory, that "artificial intelligence is a type of electronic text in nature and cannot replace the brain text armed with ethical consciousness, which accounts for Adam's failure to deal with ethical issues in the world of humans" (61). In "From Brain Text to the Final Draft: On Ibsen's Ethical Choices in *Pillars of Society*," Su and Xiong Hui read the four drafts of Henrik Ibsen's play *Pillars of Society* as his "brain texts" and observe "Ibsen's ethical choices in 'decoding' his brain text into written text" (48). In her research of Japanese literary works, Ren enacts "brain text" theory to reveal "the basic ethical principles of the

metaphorical subject's construction of brain texts" (50). The "brain text" theory, in this way, opens up new space for evaluating different textual forms, writers' manuscripts, and literary genres. Mostly buttressed by Chinese or Asian scholars,⁴ it is expected to become more popular in international scholarship in the near future.

The "brain text" theory and its critical practice, on the whole, reflect the multidisciplinary intersection of literature, linguistics, neuroscience, and ethics in Chinese literary theory and criticism and provide a revealing exploration of the essential distinction between the human brain and artificial intelligence. With constant efforts, it bids fair to execute more theoretical exchanges with the Western world.

DIGITAL HUMANITIES

Digital humanities, despite originally a Western approach, is nowadays basking in the global limelight. As the study of "digital humanities" in the age of AI enters a new stage of development, Chinese critics not only pay attention to the core concepts, research progress, and critical approaches of digital humanities, but also launch sustained theoretical discussions on computational criticism, distant reading, and online literary criticism. As one may be aware, the genesis of digital humanities is generally ascribed to Roberto Busa's 1949 "Aquinas Project," in which he utilized computers to conduct indexing and computing studies on St. Thomas Aquinas's complete theological writings, presenting an automated analysis of the possibility of human expression. Since then, natural language processing and literary stylistics have become the two main methods of digital humanities criticism. *A Companion to Digital Humanities* by Susan Schreibman et al. and *Digital Humanities* by Anne Burdick et al. put forward and make clear the concept of "digital humanities," clarifying its core idea as a combination of traditional humanities and computational methods to develop interdisciplinary research, such as humanities computing and quantitative analysis. Although the idea of digital humanities is accompanied by the wave of computer invention and information technology, it has actually turned into an influential discipline and emanated unprecedented vitality now that we have entered the era of AI. In this aspect, Western scholars show a predilection for and proficiency in computational literary (primarily narrative) studies. For instance, Katherine Bode postulates the performative theory of literary knowledge and proclaims that CLS (Computational Literary Studies), through applying scientific methods both to literary texts and to archives, "employs highly conventionalized literary notions of both science and literary phenomena in describing its practice" (545). Her intention is to defend CLS's

participation in producing literary knowledge and objects instead of degrading it into a mere methodology. Andrew Piper and Sunyam Bagga map out a data-driven theory of narrativity, a framework that argues for “the empirical testing of narrative theory using the process of machine learning and predictive modeling” (879). Their research intimates the potent potential for integrating computation and data into literary and narrative studies. Chinese scholars also engage in the debate on digital humanities, yet in a relatively comparative, conceptual, and constructing manner, which can be subsumed into three significant characteristics.

First and foremost, Chinese scholars have examined the developing tendency of digital humanities in the context of mutual learning between the East and the West. In “Digital Humanities: Concept, History, Status in Quo and Its Application in Literary Studies,” Guo Yingjian analyzes the concept of digital humanities in three dimensions: concept construction, development status, and application. In so doing, Guo highlights the instrumental creativity and productive efficiency of literary computing and advocates for the establishment of relevant majors and institutions in Chinese universities (190-97). In “Digital Humanities-Oriented Literary Criticism: The Past, Present and Future,” Dan Hansong reviews the trajectories of natural language processing and corpus-based literary stylistics over the last few decades and recommends taking full advantage of machine learning prompted by AI to survey masses of internal and external materials, thereupon calling for “a new type of literary criticism which is not only characterized with special digital thinking but based on traditional literary ideas and episteme” (204). In “Advances in Digital Humanities,” Huang Shuiqing, Liu Liu, and Wang Dongbo present the advanced research progress of digital literature, digital historiography, and digital art in the West and propound the status quo of digital humanities studies in China, especially on ancient Chinese classics. It is worth noting that they enumerate the most representative research on digital humanities in China from eight aspects: “indexing, language style analysis, text encoding, digitization of classics, digital historiography and visualization, text knowledge mining, cultural heritage and image digitization, video and cultural promotion” (50). These aspects proffer several research paradigms for digital humanities with distinctive Chinese characteristics by dismantling the scaffolding of natural language processing and literary stylistics that predominate in the Western modes. Just as Wang Ning argues, digital humanities “is far more than merely a method of humanities research, but a new academic paradigm” (12). Both Eastern and Western scholars are obliged to recognize and reconstruct this paradigm.

Secondly, Chinese scholars have introduced and improved Franco Moretti’s concept of “distant reading” to promote the study of machine reading in the realm of digital humanities. Moretti’s “distant reading,” in contrast to the convention of “close reading” in literary criticism, considers world literature as a whole and advocates a

macroscopical, historical, and rhetorical reading of “units” of knowledge by means of digital archives (48). Michael Gavin, in his recent article “Why Distant Reading Works,” further buoys this concept and reassesses it as “the practice of using statistical analyses of corpora to describe their textual contents and, on that basis, to make claims about literary, intellectual, or cultural history” (613). It suggests Western scholars’ attempts to validate the viability of distant reading in gauging the literary and cultural past. Chinese scholars also expand on this concept. For example, in “Moretti’s Distant Reading and Its Influence,” Du Lanlan foregrounds the discrepancy between “distant reading” and computer criticism in the era of AI: “The digitization and visualization of empirical data bespeaks a significant token that distinguishes computer criticism from Moretti’s early distant reading methods” (190).⁵ In “Digital Humanistic Transformation of World Literature, Distance Reading and Literary Criticism: Franco Moretti’s Evolution Logic of Literary Theory,” Chen Xiaohui extends Moretti’s evolutionary logic of distant reading into four paradigms of machine reading, that is, second-hand reading, large-scaled reading, collaborative reading, and computational criticism. Chinese scholars contribute to diversifying what Chen calls the “conceptual existence” of Moretti’s theory of distant reading (114), but are somewhat deficient in reappraising, or even redefining, the warp and woof of this notion as Gavin has done.

Last but not least, Chinese scholars also endeavor to construct critical criteria for online literature, thereby opening up a new research space for digital humanities. In “Cyberspace and the Genealogy of Literary Criticism,” Nan Fan elaborates on the connotations and developmental forms of online literary criticism and points out the commonality between the computational statistical feature of digital humanities and the de-historical nature of online literature, implying the possibility of coalescing digital humanities into the genealogy of literary criticism. Likewise, in “Digital Analysis on Literary Criticism Paradigm Reconstruction of Web Literature from Digital Humanities Perspective,” Lei Chengjia specifies the matrices of online literature and verifies the feasibility of implementing digital humanities methods in online literary criticism by proposing three research paths: the genre of online literature, the regionalism of online literature, and the “off-field criticism” (concerning non-literary aesthetic elements) of online literature (174-76).⁶ When taking into account such an alternative literary form, Western scholars often revolve around the keyword of “media”: Janez Strehovec deems e-literature as a “new media art” featuring database logic, process-like nature, and customization (2); similarly, Elżbieta Winiecka compares “digital literature (electronic, online)” to new media that conforms to what Lev Manovich describes as “numerical representation, modularity, automation, variation and cultural transcoding” (293). By contrast, Chinese scholars prefer to enshrine online literature as an emerging genre, or more importantly, as Li Zhenling avers, a sort of cross-cultural world literature and national literature in the Internet age, amounting to “the fourth

largest cultural phenomenon in the world” (45). Chinese scholars’ trials of theorizing online literary criticism through the prism of digital humanities would prospectively popularize this “world literature” further.

Therefore, on the grounds of sorting out and summarizing the Western theory of digital humanities, Chinese scholars have reflected on its key concepts and put forward new viewpoints on distant reading and online literary criticism, imparting a sense of indigenization and innovation in the wave of digital humanities studies in the era of AI. What they need to break through, in contrast with the Western scholarship, is the critical practice and wider popularity of digital humanities in literary studies.⁷

POSTHUMAN THEORY

“Posthumanism” has constituted a hot topic in Western academic circles in recent years. Since the 1980s, the related research results have been surging. In “Prometheus as Performer: Towards a Posthumanist Culture?” Ihab Hassan pioneers the concept of “posthumanism” and prefigures the advent of a posthuman epoch, yet its definition is still ambiguous. N. Katherine Hayles’s *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* is widely regarded as a manifesto of posthuman discourse. Hayles constructs a narrative framework of informational, controlled, and posthuman bodies, and presents its central idea as the union of humans and artificial intelligence: “In the posthuman, there are no essential differences or absolute demarcations between bodily existence and computer simulation, cybernetic mechanism and biological organism, robot teleology and human goals” (3). “Posthuman,” therefore, signals the mutualistic symbiosis between humans and artificial intelligence in the near future. It is, per se, a sort of perception rather than a concrete form, and is essentially a speculation on the relationship between humans and contemporary technology. Other representative works include Robert Pepperell’s *The Post-Human Condition*, Neil Badmington’s *Posthumanism*, Rosi Braidotti’s *The Posthuman*, Sonia Baelo-Allué and Mónica Calvo-Pascual’s *Transhumanism and Posthumanism in Twenty-First Century Narrative*, and Christine Daigle and Matthew Hayler’s *Posthumanism in Practice*. These works display Western scholars’ ongoing debate over the posthuman and its aftereffect on sciences, humanities, education, the Anthropocene, and the age of AI. Aware of the rapid development of AI technology and the blurring of the boundary between man and machine, Chinese academic circles also reexplore the essence of man via the theory of “posthumanism.”

Chinese scholars have embraced and advanced the resources of Western posthuman theory, and their major contribution is to classify, discern, and discard certain presumptions and to illuminate those unique critical discourses fundamental to this theory. For instance, in “Posthuman Theory: From Critical Theory to Poetics of Subjectivity,” Yang Jianguo defines and differentiates the terms “posthuman,” “posthuman theory,” and “posthumanism,” indicating the evolutionary direction of posthuman theory towards a poetics of subjectivity. In the essay, noteworthy, he diagnoses three kinds of subject images in posthuman theory—the cyborg subject, the zoe subject, and the actor-network subject—and identifies from its poetics of subjectivity four parameters, that is, “imaginary representation,” “open intermediation,” “heterogeneous polysemy,” and “other-directed vectoriality” (241).⁸ Also, in “Nomadism of Life: An Introduction into Rosi Braidotti’s Posthuman Critical Theory,” he classifies posthuman conceptions in Western academia into four branches: futurist posthuman theory, critical posthuman theory, feminist posthuman theory, and philosophical posthuman theory of science and technology, among which Braidotti’s critical posthuman theory is favored and crystallized into four core views: “the view of life centered on ‘Zoe,’ the view of nomadism based on ‘becoming,’ the view of the global based on ‘the local,’ and the view of politics based on ‘creation’” (66). Yang’s introduction and interpretation of Western posthuman critical theories, to a certain extent, enhances the breadth and profundity of posthuman theories and provides a supplementary theoretical framework for both Eastern and Western researchers.

In addition, Chinese scholars have tentatively forged some fresh theoretical discourses by incorporating some other critical perspectives into posthuman theory. For instance, in “Artificial Intelligence and Post-Human Aesthetics,” Wang Xiaohua combines posthuman theory with aesthetics and puts forward three forms of posthuman aesthetics: “the interactive aesthetics of human, machine, and natural existence,” “the embodied aesthetics of human-machine continuity,” and “the enhanced ecological aesthetics of machine subject” (85).⁹ In “Post-Humanism, Modern Technology and the Future of the Humanities,” Yan Guidi demonstrates, from the perspective of the philosophy of technology, the congeniality between posthuman theory and critical theories of technology constructed by Karl Marx, Martin Heidegger, Herbert Marcuse, and Jürgen Habermas. Meanwhile, he points up the difference between the “subject/object” dualism in Western philosophy and the “unification of man and nature” (天人合一) in traditional Chinese ideology (54), calling more attention to those contemporary problems entrenched in China.

The discussion of posthuman theory in Chinese academic circles not only dives into a dialogue with the international academia, but also marches towards a succession of unique Chinese discourses. Yet there is still a long way to go: theoretical exploration of the posthuman in the era of AI requires more efforts from the Eastern world, and Chinese scholars ought to keep a closer eye on the localization and complication of Chinese issues.

REVOLUTION AND EXPANSION OF LITERARY CRITICAL PRACTICE

The unstinting trove of innovative literary theories has paved way for the revolution and expansion of literary critical practice in the era of AI. Broadly speaking, where Western scholars leverage their theoretical resources, such as cognitive poetics, humanities computing, digital formalism, and posthumanism, to navigate the trend of new-fashioned literary research, Chinese critics entertain a propensity for humanistic concern and critical thinking. More specifically, Chinese scholars contribute to the prosperity of literary studies by making the best of ethical literary criticism, looking into particular literary problems and discourses in the era of AI, and figuring out the similarities and differences between AI literature and traditional literature.

PROMOTING ETHICAL LITERARY CRITICISM

Ethical issue is a key concern in the era of AI. With the rapid development of environmental engineering, biomedicine, gene editing, big data analysis, and other high technologies, human subjectivity has substantially faltered and a battery of ethical issues have successively ensued. How to accurately apprehend the “double-edged sword” nature of the era of AI and poignantly ruminate on the ethical issues resulting from technological progress is a pivotal task jointly confronted by natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Under these circumstances, Chinese critics have been devoted to interdisciplinary research, focusing on such topics as environmental ethics, biotechnological ethics, and robotic ethics in literature.

Environmental ethics in literary criticism is principally concerned with the climate crisis and the problem of garbage, which has led to the consideration of environmental justice, non-human discourse, and the Anthropocene. In the twenty-first century, the climate crisis has become a controversial topic. As Wang Hongri accentuates, “as climate change becomes intertwined with

capitalism, neoliberalism, consumerism, and the like, its discourses have proved to be prominently complicated” (11).¹⁰ The development of AI technology has not alleviated environmental problems, but brought a greater burden to the ecological environment with more natural resources consumption and more new solid waste due to the depreciation of AI products. In October 2021, when “The 10th International Conference on Ethical Literary Criticism” was held in Beijing, China, more than 500 scholars from China, the United States, the United Kingdom, and other countries participated in the conference and presented their understanding of literary criticism in the age of AI. The climate issue has aroused many scholars’ attention (not limited to Chinese): for instance, Karen Thornber delivered a keynote presentation entitled “Ethical Literary Criticism, Climate, and Gender Justice in the Era of Artificial Intelligence,” pointing out that the environmental problems caused by climate change have not been alleviated by the development of technology, but rather increased the vulnerability of disadvantaged groups (Huang Qi 170). In the academic forum “Anthropocene, Climate Change, and Literary Reproduction” held in 2021, Chinese scholars combined the study of climate crisis narratives with postmodern critical theories and perspectives such as ethics and justice to probe into intergenerational justice, climate ethics, ecological cosmopolitanism, and the compatibility between Chinese Taoist thought and Anthropocene theory. Some Chinese journal articles that touch upon climate change in the Anthropocene include Jiang Lifu’s “A Brief History of Cli-Fi and a Tentative Construction of the Anthropocene Cli-Fi Criticism,” Wang Hongri’s “Scale Critique, Nonhuman Agency, and Mesh: Critical Approaches to Climate Change Fiction,” Yuan Yuan’s “Critical Climate Change: A Theoretical Perspective for the Construction of World Literary History,” and Hua Yuanyuan’s “Echoes of Tao: Taoist Thoughts and the Theory and Reality of the Anthropocene.” These conferences and articles situate human and nonhuman in the geological phylogeny of the earth to highlight the significance of nonhuman agency and decentralization in the latest literary criticism, thus embracing and advocating a future-oriented and ethics-oriented approach in the era of AI.

Moreover, Chinese scholars have also taken note of garbage writing in literary works, inquiring into the cruxes, causes, and solutions of ecological problems. For instance, Dai Guiyu and Lü Xiaofei argue that the garbage narrative in Don DeLillo’s novel *Underground* unveils the anti-ecological nature of the capitalist system and calls for “adhering to the ecological socialist views of world, labor, consumption and happiness” (140). Zhang Jianran asserts that novelist Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*, by means of garbage writing, interrogates consumerist ideology and anthropocentric thought, undermines the myth of technology, and exhibits “the power to counter against alienated consumption, alleviate the burden of ecological environment and save the subject” (42). The concern for environmental ethics demonstrates Chinese scholars’ humanistic care and critical thinking, ushering in

a new perspective for literary criticism (particularly on resource consumption and new waste) in the wave of AI technology.

The ethical criticism of biotechnology focuses on the impact of artificial intelligence, bioengineering, and cloning technology on the human body and social ethics, expressing concern for moral responsibility and care for life ethics. In “The 10th International Conference on Ethical Literary Criticism,” Stuart Christie scrutinized the impact of artificial intelligence, computational thinking, and technological rationality on human creativity, and called on the government and the public to assume ethical responsibilities so as to “realize the harmonious coexistence of ethical thinking and computational thinking” (as qtd. in Huang Qi 171).¹¹ Many Chinese critics pay keen attention to biotechnological writing in literary works—the diethylstilbestrol in Ruth Ozeki’s *My Year of Meats*, the transgenic crops in Ozeki’s *All Over Creation*, and the test-tube baby in Jodi Picoult’s *My Sister’s Keeper*, among others—that highlight such issues as food poisoning, reproductive justice, and medical ethics. They illustrate in literary criticism that biotechnological development is a potentially huge threat to life, health, and traditional ethics. For example, Wang Taohua and Cheng Tongxin, by probing into the theme of human cloning in Kazuo Ishiguro’s novel *Never Let Me Go*, criticize the backlash of biotechnology against life ethics, evincing that “the eternal essence of ethics and morality is to respect and revere life” (25). The critique of biotechnology in the era of AI attests to Chinese scholars’ concern for the alienation of technology and the gravity of life ethics, which, to some degree, can reconcile the contradictions between technology and ethics and expedite the sustainable development of human society.

Chinese academics also register a sustained interest in robotic ethics or human-machine relations in science fiction. Most researchers, grounded in the theory of ethical literary criticism, investigate from multiple perspectives the robotic ethics in Western science fiction like Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, Philip K. Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, Ian McEwan’s *Machines Like Me*, Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Klara and the Sun*, and so on. While analyzing these novels, they persistently enquire: “Can machines think?” or “Can robots replace humans?”, performing an unceasing exploration of the core ethical issues in the era of AI. For example, Lü Chao divides human attitudes towards robots in Western science fiction into three stages: “refusing to accept them, confining them to the servant role, and blending human and robot into post-human Cyborg” (34), suggesting a reflection on robotic ethics and a prediction of the impending occurrence of human-machine symbiosis. In the meantime, Chinese science-fiction writers also dedicate themselves to imagining and delineating robots. Unlike those well-known Chinese science-fiction novels such as Han Song’s (韩松) *Red Ocean* (红色海洋) and Liu Cixin’s (刘慈欣) *The Three-Body Problem* trilogy (三体) which concentrate

on ecological crises, younger writers begin to foray into the subject of robotic ethics, with works like Chen Qiufan's (or Stanley Chan, 陈楸帆) *The Waste Tide* (荒潮) and Fei Dao's (飞氲) *The Robot Who Liked to Tell Tall Tales* (讲故事的机器人). Chinese scholars' literary criticism and creation of robotic, human-machine ethics make for a mutual learning between Eastern and Western literatures, cultures, and civilizations.

To sum up, Chinese critics in the era of AI accord particular attention to ethical issues in the wake of scientific and technological development and strive to rethink and reemploy existing Western theories from the perspective of traditional Chinese culture and philosophy, thereupon purveying some sorts of Chinese thoughts and imaginations for the advancement of literary criticism. To put it frankly, however, Western theoretical resources—especially on climate change, medical humanities, posthumanism, and the Anthropocene—still occupy a crucial position for Chinese scholars to articulate their ethical concern for those technological or planetary emergencies. The Chinese circles, whose original theories and literary genres remain comparatively out of proportion to their Western counterparts, are thus beholden to bring forth the most distinctive ones, among them ethical literary criticism and Chinese science fiction, to the Western world.¹²

EXPANDING ISSUES AND DISCOURSES OF LITERARY CRITICISM

The advent of the era of AI has exerted a profound impact on the issues and discourses that currently dominate literary criticism. Since the twentieth century, the dominant kernels of literary criticism have rotated around either the internal compositions of literary texts (such as literary technique, structure, deconstruction, etc.) or the external contexts (such as issues of gender, class, race, society, culture, colonization, empire, etc.). In other words, literary critics' focus is either on the artistic form of literary imagination or on the human situation and the way of seeking a breakthrough in those complex environments, all premised on human experiences and spirits. In the era of mechanical reproduction, industrialization and technological development have subverted the ontology and evaluation standards of art with an alien force, giving birth to new critical discourses such as cultural production and technological criticism. Nowadays, in the age of AI, the relationship between humanities and technology becomes much more complicated, conveying a dynamic interaction and integration that is bound to inject fresh blood into the discourse of literary criticism. Huang Yue has translated this transition as such: "If 'simulation' represents the core of technology in the age of mechanical reproduction, then virtuality is becoming an important proposition common to literature and even to all humanities" (17).¹³ AI's computational language, neural networks, and

machine designs are all characterized by virtuality and non-humanity, so literary studies have begun to add the layer of virtuality, and literary critical discourses have shifted to post-human and non-human theoretical constructions and critical practices.

Literary criticism in the context of virtuality has developed entirely new topics in both Western and Chinese circles. Western scholars are expert in theoretical debates and explorations of neoteric narratives. In *Virtual Reality: The Last Human Narrative?*, for example, Thorsten Botz-Bornstein disentangles the characteristics of human reality and posthuman virtual reality and adumbrates “a post-anthropocentric situation” that reconciles both (12). Botz-Bornstein’s work intimates a frequently-used approach in Western literary criticism: invoking manifold metaphysical concepts from Western philosophers (like Friedrich Bouterwek and Friedrich Nietzsche in Botz-Bornstein’s case) to compare with or come up with new theories and practices. Chinese scholars, relatively inadequate in thinking back to absorb traditional theoretical assets, usually turn directly to contemporary concerns and look for possible solutions. Their literary criticism fixates not only on the ethical dimension mentioned above, but also on the bodily and emotional dimensions.

In terms of the bodily dimension, Chinese scholars pay close attention to the phenomenon of human-computer intermingling and the combination of organismic and inorganic bodies in the era of AI, thereupon exploring such themes as virtual bodies and new subjects. From the outset of the 1960s, when the concept of “Cyborg” was initiated in the Western academia, international and Chinese scholars have been debating on Cyborgs, modified humans, biochemical humans, and other mechanized organisms. “Cyborg” turns into a high-frequency word in the era of AI. Applying Cyborg to literature means to rely “on the basis of traditional literature, creating original novels on ‘Artificial Intelligence’ and ‘Intelligence Amplification,’ including topics like robot manufacturing, artificial limbs, genetic modification, and full internet access” (Wang Yiping 88).¹⁴ These topics are essentially reflections on and explorations of new forms of the body. For example, Liu Shuliang indicates that the concept of body occupies a key position in the era of AI, and he summarizes three paradigms for interpreting virtual bodies: the “coded body” constructed by digital games and virtual reality, the “metaphoric body” that reconstructs human senses and influences mass communication of digital art in the Internet-based digital age, and the “flesh emulation” that seeks to align the technological body with the human body (103). Flesh emulation, a literary theme that science fiction enjoys, constitutes a bold imagination of future bodies and new subjects. In “The Image of Artificial Intelligence in Contemporary Science Fiction,” Cheng Ye affirms the possibility of the fusion of the human body and AI, and points out that behind the fusion of human and machine lies human anxiety

about the loss of identity and subjectivity: “In the proliferating virtual illusions, the ‘human’ loses its subjectivity, and its ethical life and spiritual values will be redefined by the AI program” (188).¹⁵ From virtual bodies and new subjects to disordered ethical relations and destructed spiritual values, literary discourses in the AI era show great particularity and vitality.

In the emotional dimension, Chinese scholars respond to the central questions of whether AI has emotions and whether it can possess emotions, pointing to the nucleus of humanist values. The essence of literature is to express emotion, which falls within the scope of traditional literary criticism. But is emotion a unique human trait? Are desires and individuality in the purview of humanism the exclusive privileges of human beings? In response to these questions, Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* is taken as a popular research object for Chinese critics and has provoked different critical opinions. For instance, in “The Emotion and Ethics in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*,” Wang Zhenping and Chen Xin compare the evolution of androids’ emotions and the degradation of human emotions in the novel, attributing the protagonists’ cognitive dilemma to not only technical issues but also social psychological and moral ethical problems. In “A Study of Desires and Emotions in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*,” Wang Yuying and Hao Tianhu interpret the titular “dream” as androids’ ability to communicate desires and emotions, revealing “the humans’ lack of emotion, the evolution of the androids’ desire and its effect on human emotion” (477). The tentative dissection of bionic robots’ desires and emotions showcases Chinese scholars’ outlook on human-machine emotional communication as well as their caution on the control of AI technology. Chinese scholars also scout for innovative approaches to affective machines and artificial emotions. Liu Yuedi argues in “Artificial Intelligence, Emotional Machine and the ‘Paradox of Emotion-Intellect’” that robots lack emotional internality and their “intelligence” is greater than “emotion,” so “the active engagement of the development of science and technology in the field of human emotions is to try to break a new ‘paradox of emotion-intellec[t]s’” (76). Hu Jingpu and Chen Fan adopt a more positive attitude in “Approach Analysis of ‘Artificial Emotion’ Research,” pointing out that artificial emotion research can promote the integration of technology and humanities, “forming a two-way giving of emotion between human and technology” (133). Regardless of diverse outlooks and attitudes, Chinese scholars’ research on machines’ emotions adds a new layer to literary criticism in the era of AI.

Another heatedly disputed topic within literary criticism in the era of AI is the theoretical construction and critical practice of non-human narratives. Shang Biwu has investigated the concept, types, and functions of non-human narratives, and presented his critical practices with the science fiction of Ian McEwan and Kazuo Ishiguro as the core. In “Non-Human Narratives: Concepts, Types and Functions,”

he divides non-human narratives into four types: “narratives of natural objects, narratives of supernatural objects, narratives of artificial objects, and narratives of artificial humans” (121), which exhibits an effort to undermine anthropocentric thinking in Western narrative theories. His seminal essay, “Towards a Theory of Nonhuman Narrative,” which appeared in the international journal *Neohelicon*, bears testimony to Chinese scholars’ theoretical dialogues with Western literary circles. Shang’s focus on narratives of artificial objects and artificial humans can serve as a response to the literary representation of androids and robots in the era of AI. In “Delving into Their Worlds: Nonhuman Narrative in *Nature’s* Science Fictions,” he further generalizes four sorts of non-human narratives in science fictions: plant narratives, alien narratives, thing narratives, and machine narratives, noting that science fictions “not only portray the future worlds of how human lives are changed by science and technology, but also reveal how humans approach the nonhuman world and investigate the unknown” (59). These concepts and types of nonhuman narratives, to a large extent, would contribute to the theoretical reconstruction and practical innovation of literary criticism in the era of AI.

In a word, Chinese scholars have made efforts to integrate the changing features of the AI era into literary criticism, to expand the scope of literary research issues and discourses, and to promote the interdisciplinary and multidimensional studies of literature. What they need to improve are the ways to absorb traditional philosophical treasures into contemporary concerns (as Western scholars have done) and disseminate their innovative theories and practices in the international arena.

COMPARING AI LITERATURE WITH TRADITIONAL LITERATURE

Literary criticism in the era of AI cannot shy away from the clash with AI literature. Artificial intelligence has not only updated the vocabularies of literary criticism, but also participated in literary creation and generated new literary forms. In 2017, Microsoft released a collection of poems titled *Sunshine Misses Windows* (阳光失了玻璃窗) created by the robot “Microsoft Little Ice” (微软小冰), demonstrating AI’s extraordinary machine-learning capabilities and creative abilities. In 2022, OpenAI launched the AI-driven chatbot program ChatGPT, which can understand and learn human language and conduct contextual dialogue and literary creation based on the technology of natural language processing. As Yang Shousen concedes in “Artificial Intelligence and Artistic Creation,” “regardless of people’s acceptability and attitudes, the development of AI in the field of literature and art has challenged traditional human creativity and is changing the tradition of human creation and

the concepts of literature and art” (189).¹⁶ This prophecy has been largely borne out in recent years.

The intervention of AI in literary writing has triggered a heated discussion among Western and Chinese scholars. Western scholars have expressed different opinions on AI’s literary capacities, especially narrative ones. Angus Fletcher criticizes AI’s symbolic logic, lack of causal reasoning, and incapability of processing the narrative components of literature, claiming that “computers will never learn to read or write literature” (1). Jon Chun and Katherine Elkins, in their rebuttal to Fletcher’s article, detail the key concepts, historical progress, and landmark breakthroughs of AI technology and look forward to ever-emerging AI models that “can analyze and generate narrative” (104). N. Katherine Hayles’s “Inside the Mind of an AI: Materiality and the Crisis of Representation,” in an eclectic manner, not only finds fault with the “systemic fragility of reference for AI’s language understanding,” but also points to the prospective engagement of literary criticism with “machine narratives” (636). Chinese scholars have also joined the debate on AI’s literary valences, yet in a more comprehensive and comparative fashion. They strive to distinguish the similarities and differences between AI literature and traditional literature mainly from three aspects: the creation mechanism, essential characteristics, and limitations of AI literature.

First, Chinese scholars have analyzed the impact of AI literature on traditional literary creation process and literary concepts. Lu Wenchao, in “Differences between Artificial Intelligence and Human’s Work,” points out that “AI works are not different from human works in terms of formal demerits or merits, but rather in terms of artistic events in the creative process” (196).¹⁷ In “AI Writing and New Changes in Literature,” Yang Dandan explores the changes of AI literature in regard to occurring context, creative subjects, textual patterns, and existential value:

AI writing makes the subject of literary creation replaced from “human” to “machine,” in which process, the boundary between “human” and “non-human” becomes blurred, and literature becomes the mixture of “human” and “machine.” The replacement of literary subject equips the intelligent writing machine with the dual attributes of creative subject and productive tool, thereby producing “regenerative” texts and transforming literature from “aesthetic art” to “computational technology.” (117)¹⁸

More critically, in “Literary Mind and Machine Chip: Artificial Intelligence Literature in the View of Ancient Chinese Literary Theory,” Tao Feng and Liu Jiamin resort to the parameters of indigenous Chinese literary theories to compare the similarities and differences between AI literature and traditional literature: in the generative stage, the former is “a thing without consciousness” (无识之物), while the latter is “an instrument with a soul” (有心之器) (94); in the creative conceptual

stage, the former is based on “imaginary coding” (想象编码), while the latter is on “the unification of soul and things” (神与物游) (95); and in the final materialized stage, the former appears as “affective computing” (情感计算), while the latter as “mind governing disposition” (心统性情) (97). Chinese scholars’ multi-dimensional comparison between AI writing rationales and traditional literary components, yoked with an indigenous Chinese standpoint, is instrumental in an in-depth understanding of the maelstrom of multifarious textual forms in the AI era.

Second, Chinese scholars have attempted to summarize the essential attributes of AI literature. For example, in “From Textual Experiments to Experimental Texts: Expressive Repetition in ‘Artificial Intelligence Literature,’” Zhu Tianhua examines the machine thinking of AI experimental texts and puts forward that the core feature of AI writing is the repetition of expression. In “On the Symbolic Form and Embodied Ethics of AI Literary Texts,” Peng Chengguang points to the symbolic nature of AI literature and divides it into three textual forms: “meaningless text” (无意义文本), “quasi-meaning text” (准意义文本) and “meaningful text” (意义文本) (174), meanwhile emphasizing that embodied ethical principles should be abided by in interpretive activities. In “Artificial Intelligence Literature and Its Challenge to the Conception of Modern Literature,” Li Guocheng contextualizes AI literature in the framework of post-human and post-literary developments and relocates it to the sequential and connectionist paradigms, arguing that “contemporary AI literature can be perceived as cyborg literature, harmonizing human and cyborg identities and offering cross-boundary potential in terms of human and machine perspectives, author and reader roles, and language and non-language texts” (90). These articles record Chinese scholars’ continuous inquiries into the nature of AI literature: not only in the linguistic or textual dimension, but also in relational and ethical ones.

Third, Chinese scholars have realized AI literature’s insurmountable—at least for now—limitations. For instance, in “On Artificial Intelligence and Literary Creation,” Wang Chunhong reconsiders AI literature from the aspects of literary tradition, literary ontology, and literary psychology, highlighting the irreplaceability of human subjective consciousness. In “The Dilemma of Interpreting Artificial Intelligence Literature and Its Ways Out,” Wang Zeqing and Meng Fanxiao point out AI’s lack of experience and the interpretative unsaturation of AI literature, revealing the dual dilemma of interpretation and creation of AI literature. In “The Triple Challenges of Artificial Intelligence Literature,” Tao Feng recapitulates the three major limitations of AI literature as such: 1) it is unable to generate literary language with “aesthetic logic”; 2) it does not possess the core elements of literary creation such as emotion, presence, and transcendence; and 3) it further aggravates mechanical reproduction and brings about an advanced integration of technology into art (155).¹⁹ In “The Development of ‘Automatic Writing’: On the Transformation

of Artificial Intelligence into Artistic Intelligence,” Shi Liang observes ChatGPT as a “Weak AI” that lacks self-consciousness and pinpoints AI’s essential absence in three aspects, that is, “embodied absence (具身性缺失), aesthetic absence (审美性缺失), and reflective absence (反思性缺失)” (139-40). Chinese critics, in a similar vein to Western scholars who are mostly interrogating AI’s narrative capabilities, contribute to this debate by incorporating more evaluation criteria and facing up to AI’s challenge and impetus to traditional literary studies.

Through delving into the historical features of literary criticism and making recourse to indigenous categories from traditional Chinese culture, Chinese scholars shed new light on the similarities and differences between AI literature and traditional literature. Their explorations of the creative process, essential features, and extant limitations of AI literature bid fair to enact a constructive dialogue with the Western scholarship. More noteworthy, Chinese scholars are, at this very moment, interested in and engaged with a theoretical construction for “AI literary criticism,” which is still an untrodden field, even for Western literary circles.²⁰ In “Scientific Selection and AI Literature,” Nie equates AI phase as the stage of “scientific selection,” appraises AI literature as a “new literature genre,” and configures such new critical concepts as “AIGC multi-modal literature” and “AIGC digital writers” (8). In “Criticism of AI Literature: Approach, Paradigm and Focus,” Zeng Wei, after redefining AI literature as “algorithmic literature” and “intelligent entity,” constructs a coordinate diagram for AI literary criticism that consists of the AI works, the world, the human-machine creative community, and the audience, and charts an approach that “extend[s] from textual criticism to algorithmic criticism, and further to relational criticism, incorporating reflexive criticism to reflect on human literature” (160). These works not only testify to Chinese scholars’ ongoing discussion on the limitations and potentials of AI literature, but also signal an invitation to Western circles to reexamine the challenges and possibilities for literary studies in the AI era.

CONCLUSION

In the era of AI, Chinese scholars have made some new explorations of literary studies from both theoretical and practical aspects, forming a dialogue with Western academic circles and casting new light on our understanding of the symbiotic relationship between humans and computers. Their research mainly reflects three significant characteristics. First, the perspective of mutual learning between the East and the West is the starting point and basic principle of Chinese scholars’ research. Chinese scholars are devoted to embracing rewarding theories

and methods from international academic circles, to critically reflecting on these theoretical and methodological resources, and to putting forward original viewpoints endemic to Chinese contexts and thoughts. This implies a mode of unbiased, inclusive, and broad-minded thinking, one that may well conduce to the emergence of more reasonable and more viable approaches. Such mode of thinking can find evidence in the development of brain text theory, the promotion of digital humanities and posthuman theory, the expansion of ethical literary criticism, and the attention paid to new literary criticism. Second, harmony in diversity is the basic position of Chinese scholars' research. Literary studies have always been placed in the collision between different cultures and ideologies. When Chinese scholars apply the theory of digital humanities and posthuman criticism to the analysis of Chinese culture and, vice versa, employ the original Chinese ethical literary criticism to the interpretation of world literature, they follow a sense and stance of harmony in diversity. Finally, interdisciplinary research is Chinese scholars' fundamental approach. The essential feature of the era of AI is indeed interdisciplinary, which determines the main characteristics of literary research in this age. Brain text theory, digital humanities, and posthuman theory are all proposed and promoted under the umbrella of interdisciplinary research methods. Environmental ethics, biotechnology ethics, robot ethics, virtual bodies, new subjects, and AI literature are also testimony to the core status of interdisciplinary perspectives in both scientific and humanities studies. Both Western and Chinese scholars ought to undertake the responsibility of reconsidering and reviving the whole gamut of literary studies in the era of AI from, if possible, a mutual-learning, inclusive yet indigenized, and cross-disciplinary perspective.

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NOTES

1. If we take “AI literature” (人工智能文学) as the title for information retrieval, there will be forty-two scholarly articles (which are indexed in Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index) exhibited in the *CNKI* database until December 2024. By contrast, there are only sixteen entries (half of them from Eastern scholars) in the literature category in *Web of Science*. Different from Chinese critics who are keen on reexamining the full spectrum of literary research, Western scholars, as we will argue, accord more attention to humanities computing and literary narrativity in the era of AI.
2. In the special issue on “Culture, Theory, Data” (2022/2023) in *New Literary History* (Johns Hopkins UP), Ted Underwood and others count “data” as the core of current humanities and claim in the introduction that “computation has become important enough in a wide range of disciplines to prompt a broad conversation about its implications for cultural theory” (520). The featured articles mainly argue for such assumptions as computational literary studies, distant reading, computational cultural theory, and a data-driven theory of narrativity. Similarly, *Critical Inquiry* (U of Chicago P) features such articles as Katherine Bode’s “What’s the Matter with Computational Literary Studies?” (2023) and James A. Evans and Jacob G. Foster’s “Algorithmic Abduction: Robots for Alien Reading” (2024). *CLCWeb* (Purdue UP) is also calling for papers on “AI and/as Form,” with an attempt to theorize AI’s style and digital formalism.
3. Translation ours. The original Chinese is: “以大脑为载体的脑文本、以书写材料为载体的书写文本和以电子介质为载体的电子文本（电子文本也称为数字文本）。”
4. It is worth noting that *Kritika Kultura* has proffered two forums on “Ethical Literary Criticism, Brain Text, and New Readings of World Literature” (2021/2022) guest edited by Shang Biwu and Maria Luisa Torres Reyes. The contributors in the issues are mostly from China, Philippines, or Korea. Also, Anh Dan Nguyen’s “Brain Text and Vietnamese Novelists’ Ethical Choices Since 1986” (2024) in *Forum for World Literature Studies* examines Vietnamese novelists’ textualization of their brain texts, thus testifying to the reception of the “brain text” theory in Vietnam.
5. Translation ours. The original Chinese is: “对实证数据的数字化和可视化是计算机批评区别于莫莱蒂早期远读方法的重要标志。”
6. Translation ours. The original Chinese is: “网络文学类型研究” “网络文学区域性研究” “网络文学‘场外批评’的建构”。
7. As we have noted, Western scholars began digital humanities studies, especially literary computing as in Roberto Busa’s 1949 “Aquinas Project,” much earlier than Chinese researchers. As regards academic journals about this field, in Western circles, *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities* (Oxford UP) was founded in 1986 and *International Journal of Humanities and Arts Computing: A Journal of Digital Humanities* (Edinburgh UP) was in 1989. In China, however, *Digital Humanities* (Tsinghua University and Zhonghua Book Company) was initiated in 2020 and *Digital Humanities Research* (Renmin University of China) was in 2021.
8. Translation ours. The original Chinese is: “想象表征性” “开放中介性” “异质多义性” “他向矢量性”。

9. Translation ours. The original Chinese is: “人类、机器、自然存在的交互美学” “人类—机器连续性的具身性美学” “机器主体的加强版的生态美学”。
10. Translation ours. The original Chinese is: “气候变化与资本主义、新自由主义、消费主义等交错纠缠，话语复杂性愈发凸显。”
11. Translation ours. The original Chinese is: “呼吁教师、家长以及政府承担起伦理教育责任，以此为基础实现伦理思维与计算思维的和谐共存。”
12. Nie Zhenzhao's theory of “Ethical Literary Criticism” has attracted attention from Western scholars. There are 151 entries containing this term in the titles in *Web of Science* through December 2024. The latest articles from Western scholars include Arleen Ionescu's “Dilemmas Beyond Ethics: A Critique of Eastern Ethical Literary Criticism” (2024), Tomo Virk's “A Chinese Version of Ethical Literary Criticism” (2024), Galin Tihanov's “On the Significance and Originality of Nie Zhenzhao's Ethical Literary Criticism” (2022), Knut Brynhildsvoll's “Homo Homini Lupus: The Relationship between Man and Animal as a Topical Challenge to Ethical Literary Criticism” (2020), Leonard Harris's “Universality: Ethical Literary Criticism (Nie Zhenzhao) and the Advocacy Theory of Aesthetics (Alain Locke)—Ethical Literary Criticism between China and America” (2019), and so forth. There are sixty-four entries about “Chinese science fiction” in *Web of Science* through December 2024. A special issue on “Chinese Science Fiction in Global Dialogism,” guest edited by Wu You, is forthcoming in *Critical Arts* (Routledge), which bids fair to promote this genre further on the global stage.
13. Translation ours. The original Chinese is: “如果说‘仿真’代表了机械复制时代的技术核心，那么虚拟性正成为文学乃至所有人文学科共同面对的重要命题。”
14. Translation ours. The original Chinese is: “在文学传统的基础上，形成了以融合机器人制造、人造肢体、基因改造、网络全接入等的‘人工智能’与‘智能增强’（IA/Intelligence Augmentation或Intelligence Amplification）为主题的小说。”
15. Translation ours. The original Chinese is: “在不断增殖的虚拟幻象中，‘人’失去了主体性，其伦理生活、精神价值将被AI程序所定义。”
16. Translation ours. The original Chinese is: “不管人们是否接受、看法如何，人工智能在文学艺术领域的开发，已经对人类的传统创作提出了挑战，已经在改变着人类传统的创作格局及其文艺观念。”
17. Translation ours. The original Chinese is: “人工智能作品与人类作品不是劣作与杰作的差别，而是艺术事件的差别。”
18. Translation ours. The original Chinese is: 人工智能写作使文学生产主体实现由“人”到“机器”的置换，在置换过程中“人”与“非人”之间的界限变得暧昧而模糊，文学成为“人”与“机器”的混合体；文学主体的置换使智能写作机器具有生产主体和生产工具的双重属性，并由此产生“再生性”文本，文学由“美的艺术”转向“计算技术”。
19. Translation ours. The original Chinese is: 人工智能难以生成具有“审美逻辑”的语言；人工智能文学产品具有一定的艺术形式，但是却不具有艺术的核心要素，如情感、在场感和超越性；人工智能艺术进一步发展了机械复制艺术，是技术对艺术的高级整合。
20. N. Katherine Hayles has touched upon this topic in her “Inside the Mind of an AI: Materiality and the Crisis of Representation” (2022/2023), but only in seven pages. She puts forward four strategies for analyzing GPT-3's texts from literary viewpoints:

1) source texts; 2) stylistics of input with regard to output; 3) how the language of a response refracts human language use; and 4) reflections of ideological biases in databases (653-59). Chinese scholars' theoretical articles on AI literary criticism have appeared in international journals. Lyu Hongbo and Fang Wenkai's "AI Turn in Ethical Literary Criticism," published in *Interdisciplinary Studies of Literature* in 2024, demonstrates the necessity, feasibility, and development trends of the AI turn in literary criticism, indicating that "[i]n the era of AI, the roles of authors, literary works, readers, and critics will undergo significant transformations" (554). Tao Feng's "AI Literature: The Disenchantment of Word and the Enchantment of Code," published in *Neohelicon*, also in 2024, recognizes AI texts as literature and argues for the theory of reader-centered reception, and the analysis and regulation of code in AI literary criticism. It evaluates AI literature as an artistic event that results in "the disenchantment of art and the enchantment of technology" (737).

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