

예이츠와 알파고:

타자성의 시학

Yeats and AlphaGo:

A Poetics of Otherness

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인간과 기계, 양자의 융합을 의미하는 포스트휴머니즘(post-humanism) 시대의 도래와 함께 의심할 여지 없이 낱알이 양자는 더욱 융합되어 가고 있다. 이 와중에 전 세계에 걸쳐 인간과 기계의 상호 숨막히는 경쟁이 선풍적으로 일어났다. 예를 들면, 최근 한국바둑의 명인과 영국의 인공지능인 알파고는 양자의 공존을 확인하는 계기가 되었다. 그렇다면 알파고와 시인 예이츠는 어떻게 연관될 수 있을까? 그것은 창세 이래 전자가 인간의 지식을 기억 장치(CPU)에 축적한 아바타(avatar)이므로, 전송된 지식으로서의 역사, 전통, 관습을 기억하는 후자와 양립가능하기 때문이다. 그리고 인간의 기억과 기계의 기억은 모두

코드화 되어 있어 해독이 가능하다는 점과 양자는 모두 그 저장된 기억을 활용하여 작용/반작용한다는 점에서 유사하다. 관련하여, 코드의 복잡한 체계로서 C. G. 융이 제시한 ‘집단무의식’ 속의 다양한 <원형들>과 J. 라캉이 주장하는 무의식을 차지하는 <타자의 담론>은 인간으로 하여금 ‘계몽적 기획’을 추진하기 위한 식자성(literacy)을 활성화 시키게 하므로, 바둑-로봇[Go-robot]을 활성화시키기 위해 수없이 바둑게임(Go-game)을 학습한 인공지능으로서 알파고와 유사하다. 게다가 시인이 원형에 의한 동기부여에 의해 시를 쓰는 것과 바둑-로봇이 알파고의 지도 아래 인간과 경쟁하는 이 모두는 어떤 모방적 실천 혹은 인체의 확대일 수 있다. 나아가, 이런 점에서 위험하고 현기증 나는 암호의 카펫 같은 본 논문은 예이츠의 작품 “비잔티움”과 연결된다. 결론적으로 알파고의 일종으로서 시작품 속에 숨겨져 있는 아일랜드 민족적 타자성은 예이츠와 아일랜드 민족을 어딘가로 추동하는 문화적 원동력으로 기능하게 될 것이다. 이니스프리(Innisfree) 혹은 디스토피아로.

Abstract

With the advent of the era of Posthumanism implicating the convergence of both human and machine, undeniably both are becoming more fused day by day. In the meantime, the mutual breath-taking competitions across the world have happened sensationally. For instance, recently the game of the Korean go-master and the British AI, AlphaGo laid a corner stone confirming the co-existence with the hetero-beings. If so, how can Alpha-

Go be concerned with W. B. Yeats? It would be why the situation of the former functioning as a kind of avatar accumulating human knowledge since Genesis can be compatible with that of the latter memorizing history, tradition and convention as the hereditary knowledge. Also, they have a common point in that the memory of both human and AlphaGo is composed of code or tongue for either human or AI to decode. Relatedly, as the complex of esoteric code, various archetypes in 'collective unconscious' suggested by C. G Jung and 'the discourse of others' argued by J. Lacan get humans to activate the affairs of literacy for the 'Enlightenment Project' to reach Mars so that they would be similar to AlphaGo as AI to animate a Go-robot. Further, both what a poet writes a poem motivated by archetypes and what a Go-robot competes with a human-being under the guidance of Alpha-Go could be some mimetic praxes further similar to a narcissistic habitus. In the sense, this paper like a carpet of risky, dizzy code spans a masterpiece of Yeats's, "Byzantium." In conclusion, the Irish national otherness lurking in the poem as a kind of AlphaGo would function as the cultural engine to drive Yeats and the Irish to somewhere, Innisfree or dystopia.

I. Horizon of otherness

Fredric Jameson¹⁾ known for us by ‘political unconscious,’²⁾ spoke of the three eras of human development as based on manual power, animal power, steam power, fossil power, electricity power and electronic power.³⁾ We are now dizzily poised on the verge of the fantastic era of electronic power propelled by the Internet and virtual reality. Marching in this fashion, we use the Internet instead of the untiring donkey as messengers, and we exploit smart computers rather than skilled but flawed accountants, so that both contribute as our performing agents. In recent times, we have heard about the sensational Go-game of a Go-master competing with AI called as AlphaGo, a derivative out of a science of complexities. A terminator like a mechanical muscular macho resembling Arnold Schwarzenegger, a rip off from a movie screen, has become entrenched in our realities to rock and change the world. This [Figure 1]⁴⁾ fantastic creation is not a virtual hero picked up from the cyberpunk of Neuromancer by William Gibson, but is a real hero surviving the Go-master. This virtual hero is controlled by a gigantic CPU(central process unit) just like the primordial tribal memory of ‘collective unconscious’ suggested by C. G. Jung, which is contrast to ‘individual unconscious’ of Sigmund Freud, a contemporary individual memory, accumulated from experiences and wisdoms since the start of human history.⁵⁾ This is the meeting point of AlphaGo and Yeats, who is a representative of Irish legacy. There are some material differences between the two in that the former is composed of chips made of an inorganic substance, while the latter is organic. The former is the fruit of reason that ‘the Enlightenment Project’ of humans has engineered and the latter is the subject of a plot that realizes the former in the virtual world. Accordingly, AI can be equal to a mechanical son of the human and the human can enjoy being the father of AI.

In this recent historic game, since the former completely defeats the latter, such a catastrophic conclusion reminds us of the internecine feud between King Laius and his son Oedipus causing the ‘Oedipus complex’ - contributing to diversification of families. Likewise, the AI son slays its father symbolically, which may be the Korean version of the complex likely to prove the universality of human cultures, and which brings us to the maxim “History repeats itself”(Geschichte wiederholt sich)proposed by Karl Marx. Here

we need to temporarily compromise on the fact that AlphaGo is controlled by a CPU generated by humans and in a similar way Yeats cannot help being affected by his Irish ancestors as the archetypal reservoir of his intelligence. In his lifetime, Yeats functioned as the agent or medium of Irish myths and legends, which became the motive of his life similar to the invisible hand of ‘auto-writing’ practiced in “A Vision”. This reminds me of the concept ‘anxiety of influence’ argued by Harold Bloom, but I make a daring thought that the term had better be changed into realities of influence. It explains why both moods, one emotional and the other mechanical, inevitably exist in the shadow of otherness. Above all, what humans overlook may be the notion that they are superior to AlphaGo in that they have produced the mechanical genius. However, I believe that both may be the same creations notwithstanding the difference of degree, since the intelligence of humans and digital machinery would share artificiality acquired by ‘language acquisition’ suggested by Noam Chomsky leading to J. Lacan’s ‘discourse of the Other’⁶⁾ or feedback of information through data.

Furthermore, this case may also be concerned with Roland Barthes’s mythology in that the realities of AlphaGo would be reflected in the same genealogy as primordial myths when considering the realities of artificial intelligence mimicked by human experience. Thus AlphaGo functioning as the alter-ego of both the human and the CPU may become a model of generalization reduced to a grand narrative of myth as an immeasurable archive of continual accumulations of experiences. Finally, I summarize that AlphaGo is a representative of the CPU, while Yeats or the human being is an agent of the archetypes unleashed from logic and reason according to the theory of Jung’s ‘individuation’ for completion of a personality by recognizing the otherness of archetypes that leads humans. Next, we discuss “Byzantium”⁷⁾ with regard to this fateful mimetic fashion driven by otherness.

II. Poetics of otherness

The unpurged images of day recede;
The Emperor’s drunken soldiery are abed;

Night resonance recedes, night walkers' song
 After great cathedral gong;
 A starlit or a moonlit dome disdains
 All that man is,
 All mere complexities,
 The fury and the mire of human veins. (CP 248)

Beginning with a panoramic spectacle, it would be the daily routine of a commoner. In the narrator's view, the daily images may be not seen as desirable. All human affairs converge and are tamed to attain the catastrophic results of the first and second principle of Energy causing stresses, strains, deformations and displacements. Daily life can be composed of man's brutalities to change the environments at his will. However, revolution, recreation and destruction are not negative but positive qualities or missions of humanity necessary for the process of normalized life. This can be compared to a child playing with clay, which is kneaded to make diverse shapes of life, some grotesque or humorous, according to the child's personal tastes, and which can be exemplified as "images" of "emperor" who struggles with hegemony, his loyal men's "soldiery" to castrate their desire and dialectic "night walkers" who tries to disrupt other people's peaceful routine. In this sense, nature, the thing itself and Tao as the presence of things are distorted by "human veins" set upon the sublime mission of mimesis to increase the entropy of disorder whose destiny can be transformed into a sticky and grubby "mire." Consequently, it may be revealed that the "drunken" "human" out of his mind tends to be contrary to nature's providence to achieve his/ her ends. The insane human is trick of archetypes in that it strives to escape from the mimetic world⁸⁾ of code that juniors willfully follow and learn from the seniors.

Before me floats an image, man or shade,
 Shade more than man, more image than a shade;
 For Hades' bobbin bound in mummy-cloth
 May unwind the winding path;
 A mouth that has no moisture and no breath
 Breathless mouths may summon;

I hail the superhuman;
I call it death-in-life and life-in-death.

In the second stanza, the narrator's basic recognition of things can be shown through the modes of "image, man or shade" in that "human" turns into "shade" or "image" just like moving from real into "hyper-real" or a tree into its 'simulacra'⁹⁾ as suggested by Jean Baudrillard. However, according to Plato, the three terms would be paralleled in vain because all things on the earth are fakes. Hamlet saw his father's "shade" and it bore a horrible "image" to bring the notion of revenge into his mind. This introduces us to the process that presence as the first cause bears things as their gracious imitations and then they are reborn into signifiers that are split into a myriad of signifieds, which can be in accord with Neoplatonism. Far from theories or -isms of the erudite on the origin or source of things, what we can simply infer from things is that every river has its source and every animal has its ancestor, which means that each terminal thing is oriented toward its center. Humans born with 'the selfish gene'¹⁰⁾ heading for immortality faithfully maintain and develop several rituals of religion, spells and superstition as the ultimate means of touching the absolute source of mysterious creation or the Holy Grail desperately seeking to escape from an asura of their competitive red ocean. In short, this obstinate chasing of a strand as the only way to reach its reel as the starting point can be a saga of life; this may be a clue to the presence exposed to thinking contradictory animals. This can be called as the 'theory of reel,' a simple trial searching for the origin through its terminal. Of course, there have been lofty but unfruitful existentialists thinking of humans as a kite severed from its thread abusing their absurd lives with opium or spirit.

Although humans, while living, have no idea of where they should go like a squirrel hovering around the same routine of 'labyrinthos' in the Greek myth, it is certain that they have their start and end points in spite of their ignorance about the after-life, since the young become the old, nature invites arts, the upper stream flows into the lower stream and the creations yearn for Creator. Although they may encounter the Absolute across the Lethe or the Jordan, they may expect no reward but only rebukes for their sinful lives in the ethereal world not affected by principle of entropy. Living things characterized by "moisture" and "breath" are suffocated by "Hades' bobbin" as the source of "mummy's

cloth.” Humans are queer creatures voluntarily struggling with a self-tailored phantom, as Heathcliff invites Catherine in a trance and Don Quixote stupidly wrestles with a windmill. In this sense, “lifeless” things summon live things to dry up their freshness. Thus humans, even if alive, would be dead beings and try to go toward eternity as implicated in “death-in-life as castration of desire and life-in-death” as reincarnation or sa s̄ara. Life and death would not be contrary but a complementary relationship that deems it unnecessary to mourn at a funeral, since the seemingly opposite terms of original/copy, nature/art and God/human, to guarantee mutual existence according to principle of interpolation¹¹⁾ would remain apart forever.

Miracle, bird or golden handiwork,
More miracle than bird or handiwork,
Planted on the star-lit golden bough,
Can like the cocks of Hades crow,
Or, by the moon embittered, scorn aloud
In glory of changeless metal
Common bird or petal
And all complexities of mire or blood.

This stanza shows us the severe hunger man has for the relative eternity of material, which leads in him to seek a complementary desire to compensate in vain, by transferring from nature into artifacts or arts. Egyptian kings were transformed into gold-masked mummies, which is blasphemous since it tries to overcome God’s providence in giving humans temporality. Put another way, humans are making history a diary of the Phoenix to last to the end of the world, so that space and time smeared with blood and sweat can arrive at the harbor of eternity as an immense mosaic of each parodied moment.

At midnight on the Emperor’s pavement flit
Flames that no faggot feeds, nor steel has lit,
Nor storm disturbs, flames begotten of flame,
Where blood-begotten spirits come

And all complexities of fury leave,
Dying into a dance,
An agony of trance,
An agony of flame that cannot singe a sleeve.

Here we see a transcendental space getting out of the principles of nature in that it is unnecessary to burn “faggot” for generation of energy and strike “steel” for making “flame.” This flame refers to a sacred fire needless of the action and reaction of profane materials, which reminds us of Mircea Eliade’s argument that human experience can be divided into two parts: sacred and profane as exemplified in Moses’s episode when he saw a humble thorn-tree burst into sacred fire on Mount Horeb(Exodus 3:2-4). Likewise, fire can be split into two categories: secular or sacred, and ironically the former may be the fuel to light the latter. Filling the stomach with a juicy steak, a fruit of burning the energy results in the birth of the human cast into the jungle of the world like that of a tragedy; another fruit of Freud’s burning passion in pursuing psychoanalytical truth from an ivory tower resulted in schizophrenia. In this sense, humans, unlike other animals that are merely searching for visible and physical objects, are queer animals in aiming for invisible and metaphysical objects in lofty “agony” unconcerned with clothing, food and shelter. Humans featured with complex qualities of animals and non-animals always stand at the cross-roads obsessed with becoming God-like human or animal-like human, which causes a matter of mimesis. The narrator may view invisible sacred “flames” as an empty slogan or a strip of “agony.” Simultaneously, the “agony of trance” can be seen as the paradox of a double-faced life and human’s efforts would be in vain reduced to the “dance” of the motion of the universe driven by Shiva the four-armed Other in Hinduism.

Astraddle on the dolphin’s mire and blood,
Spirit after Spirit! The smithies break the flood.
The golden smithies of the Emperor!
Marbles of the dancing floor
Break bitter furies of complexity,
Those images that yet

Fresh images beget,
That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea.”(CP 249)

In final stanza, the sea appears “torn,” which could be caused by aggressive “dolphin” with the phallic image, sophisticated “spirit after spirit” that tries to design the world and “gong” of succeeding waves, that is, the nervous noises from the world. “Smithies” tender “marble” as a part of nature and Michelangelo represents “images” of things from which presence seems to willingly wear its symbol to emerge before us. The motive for humans to destroy the world would be based on “mire” implicating a red ocean of existence, “blood,” “furies” and fun so that a myriad of Pygmalion as “images” alienated from nature could arise. Likewise, Michelangelo risked hurting his neck while in a mysterious trance and painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel with images from Genesis, utterly unconcerned with earthly matters. The sole mission on the earth for humans would be to become the second cause and reproduce, bring forth their offspring, just as smith must blow with bellows at busy “smithies” whose moods are similar to those of people on a crowded “dancing floor” searching for mates. They have stubbornly tried to discipline the “sea,” to bring maternal Gaia into their will and as a consequence have suffered from the distorted “images” of “agony” inherent in a symbolic order or in the process of paternity to gradually become a Frankenstein as the ‘ego-ideal’¹²⁾ in spite of themselves. Namely, the slick pebbles disciplined by repetitive waves on a sandy beach would have the same weather-beaten aspects that humans have as they become formed according to the principles of energy in pursuit of homogeneity through the normal mimetic process.

III. Recognition of otherness

“Byzantium” is a trigger to remind us of the noted lines “everlasting, nostalgic handkerchief waving toward the source of green sea”(in “flag” of Yu Chi-hwan’s); although it is a physical, historical site, it can be extended to represent a memorial of Irish cultural sources, further signifying the paradise of Albion where King Arthur had lived. Therefore, it can be seen as a sort of ‘collective unconscious’ where archetypes would host

a Dionysian festival to maintain psychic balance called as ‘individuation’(Hopcke 63), which can be compared with AlphaGo being out of its source, the CPU. Humans cannot help but escape from the myth of “Byzantium“ as a ‘mechanism of repression’ as well as the situation of AlphaGo that is subject to and controlled by the CPU. In the sense, both would be trapped in the archetypal or mechanical context and confined into unauthentic otherness by losing spontaneity and originality. Likewise, Yeats and AlphaGo would be loyal and ardent representatives born of the veiled presence overturning dehydrated Cartesian thought that even today reigns over our mind. Additionally, a little object(*objet petit a*),¹³⁾ as a residue of the desire caused by trials and errors of realities, would be a compulsive motive to advance Yeats and AlphaGo as symbolic alter-egos dedicated to the immortal alter of the agonistic and teleological intentions of the first cause that would urge both to execute their missions. Accordingly, the archaic myth that Barthes reinterprets may be like flapping the wings in the midst of human society while wearing the postmodern personas of both the poet and the machine. Similarly, humans needlessly feel concerned about the influence of “Byzantium” as their untouchable hometown, but instead must recognize its disguised aspects reflected in the work “A Vision” and the Go-game.

In this respect, it may be foolish to argue that man is superior to woman and vice versa, or that a subject views an object as the other, forgetting the undeniable reality that all things signified by code and self-contained would be meaningless before the presence of archetypes or the first cause. Finally Yeats and AlphaGo become the teleological beings destined to serve the presence or CPU with their backgrounds such that they can be qualified as God and AI embodied and represented. Biblically, just as Yeats would take after God, so AlphaGo can mimic the qualities and gifts of humans. The former would be an avatar of God or Agnus Dei and the latter that of human as the others.

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NOTE

- 1) The concrete contents can be referred to more like this: Jameson depends on the work of Ernest Mandel that split capitalism into three apparent periods coincidentally it marched with the three steps of technological development: steam engines from the mid 19th century, electricity and internal combustion engines since the late 19th century and electronic and nuclear devices since the 1940's to the present. Further, the three technological developments become the three stages of capitalism: market economy[realism] limited to the border, monopoly or imperialism[modernism] expanded to other countries and the current late capitalism [postmodernism] without borders(Sim 21).
- 2) his term would focus on sophisticated, ideological otherness lurking in seemingly innocent or naive daily happenings or pure texts in parallel with the connotations hidden in literary texts.
- 3) In this context, Best agrees with Jameson in the sense that "today, the postmodern adventure is driven largely by electronic media, computer, and biotechnologies."(149)
- 4) This figure is a parody of [The Creation of Adam] painted by Michelangelo.
- 5) In relation to this, BaeKyun Yoo, interpreting W. B. Yeats's "Parnell's Funeral and Other Poems," introduces to readers a primordial motherhood as some anonymous, esoteric and transcendental power to propel human realities stealthily(258).
- 6) Stressing that speech or utterance or parole is not based on the Ego or the subject but the Other or invisible spiritual leader, Lacan connotes that speech and language are not bound to the subject's consciousness. They originate from another site rather than consciousness—"the unconscious is the discourse of the Other." (131)

- 7) To represent Byzantium as a physical fantastic site in the academy, the poets nominates two places on earth: the Pennsylvania Terminus in the US and the Catholic Cathedral at Westminster in the UK(CW 406). As a major theme, H. Bloom recounts that “Like Adonis, Byzantium is a high song of poetic self-recognition in the shadow of mortality, and is deliberately purgatorial and Dantesque in its situation and imagery”(384).
- 8) Like the figure Truman Burbank(Jim Carry) in the movie “The Trueman Show,” Baudrillard seems to perceive that human life would be reduced to a mimetic one through the comment of “simulacra that are natural, naturalist, founded on the image, on imitation and counterfeit, that are harmonious, optimistic and that aim for the restitution or the ideal institution of nature made in God’s image.”(121)
- 9) Simulacra are copies that depict things that either had no original to begin with, or that no longer have an original. Simulation is the imitation of the operation of a real-world process or system over time(wiki.com).
- 10) The Selfish Gene is a book on evolution by Richard Dawkins, published in 1976. It builds upon the principal theory of George C. Williams’s first book Adaptation and Natural Selection. Dawkins used the term “selfish gene” as a way of expressing the gene-centred view of evolution as opposed to the views focused on the organism and the group, popularising ideas developed during the 1960s by W. D. Hamilton and others. According to the gene-centered view, the more two individuals are genetically related, the more sense (at the level of the genes) it makes for them to behave selflessly with each other(wiki.com).
- 11) In engineering and science, one often has a number of data points, obtained by sampling or experimentation, which represent the values of a function for a limited number of values of the independent variable. It is often required to interpolate (i. e. estimate) the value of that function for an intermediate value of the independent variable(wiki.com).
- 12) he originator of this term, Freud, found it hard to discern ego-ideal, ideal ego and superego like definition of ‘unconscious’. But his earnest disciple, Lacan untied the entangled knot easily: the third element may be concerned with the repression of sexual desire for the mother, the second element with ‘imaginary order’ as a site of the ‘split ego’ and the first element with ‘symbolic order’ to ‘sublimation’ to become decent normal ladies and gentlemen(Evans 52). For another specific opinion, it may be worthy of that the second element would correspond to the image of ego that we ourselves can recognize, while the first element would be the image of the ego that others around us think about us(Kim, Hyun-kang 51).
- 13) Lacan would think of ‘objet petit a’(object little-a) as an unattainable tip of desire. He seems to deny any interpretations of the term just like most of the oriental high monks on the alert of letters. However, the possible definition of the term may be as follows. “The “a” in question stands for “autre” (other), the concept having been developed out of the Freudian “object” and Lacan’s own exploitation of “otherness.” (Lacan 282)