

Unbecoming Robot and the Theatrics of Brokenness: Performativity of Technological Defects in Robot Theatres

Abstract

Since the technological performance is commonly understood in terms of high-level efficacy, organization, and functionality (McKenzie 2001), could errors and chaos suggest new complicated forms of productivity, and what are the politics of exploitation of errors in the contemporary techno-culture? With the normalization of the error-progress operator and machine logic in our algorithmic culture, which groups of bodies are to undertake the disastrous impact of techno-error and algorithmic catastrophe? From humanoid actors to social robot agents, my paper aims to decode the nuanced enactment of the ostensibly defected and low-efficacy techno-performances, from the erring robots on stage, to sophisticated AI systems, to problematize the bio-political operations that manipulate, choreograph and subvert the fallacies through culturally indexed perceptions to achieve high market value and institutional efficiency.

Focusing on the collapsed, interrupted, failed and malfunctioning robot performances in the theatre, from the robotic intervention of pathologized human body incapable of conforming to normality, to the hazardous surroundings on the damaged earth, the paper investigates the technological deviance that challenges the normative paradigm of machine's high techno-performativity (McKenzie 2001) and its social imperatives. Theoretically, by mapping out the theorization trajectory of the techno-disorder, from Heidegger's present-at-hand-ness to entropic perspectives in information theory and quantum theory, the paper carves out how the discourse on entropy and contingency are visceral in explicating the politics of distributing and disturbing the technological governance of the bio-bodies, and thus reframes a matter-meaning complex that accounts for the cross-material disorder and its performative resilience against the concurrent power structure. By reading the technological incidences of performing fallacy and error as encoded in the entropic nature of all matters and in the process of communication, the uncovering of the indetermination of technology repudiates the deterministic view of technology's almighty performance in new forms of techno-determinism (Parisi 2017). And the entropic outlook also insinuates brokenness and uncertainty as virtual performances in the nexus of contingencies rather than devaluing "the

state of exhaustion” as “reduced performance.” (Braidotti 2019, 16) Thus, through the case study of broken robotics, the paper aims to address on the performances of brokenness and fallibility as signaling possibilities of the reverse engineering of alternatives in the ever-mutating forms of techno-performativity, from theatre to broader social praxis in the emerging power dynamics of technology-driven algorithmic culture.

Reference

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