

**Problems of AI and the Convivial Public  
Philosophy based upon Audrey Tang's idea**

**Naoshi Yamawaki**

# AI as a convenient Tool

At the individual and organizational level, no one can deny that the rapid development of generative AI such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and Heygen is significantly contributing to dramatic improvements in business operations (efficiency) = reducing workloads.

As a convenient tool, generative AI relies heavily on language processing capabilities and quality of individual experiences.

In Japan, even older adults can easily acquire the skills for using IT at vocational schools if they have the motivation to keep learning, and they can also experience quasi-dialogic and dialectical thinking.

# Limits of AI

Nevertheless, this development is likely to result in a significant increase in unemployment, thereby making the implementation of effective countermeasures a matter of urgency.

From a philosophical perspective, it is crucial to thoroughly recognize that AI cannot generate authentic (genuine) human empathy, and what Pascal called the “esprit de finesse” and Smith’s moral concept of “sympathy of impartial spectator” , though AI makes fake feelings.

AI also makes us forget each understanding of historical Self that reminds us of memento mori.

# The Concept of Convivial Society

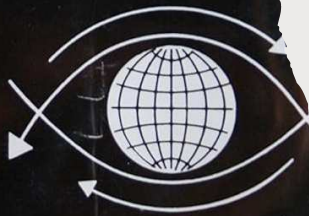
To preserve humanity and create a truly humane society, education focused on empathetic understanding of Others, or compassion is distinct from education focused on knowledge acquirement is necessary.

That is why Ivan Illich's ideas of the convivial society must be newly rehabilitated and disseminated today.

For Illich, conviviality refers to a society in which people have the freedom and ability to use tools and institutions in ways that enhance their autonomy, creativity, and mutual cooperation — rather than being controlled or dominated by them. (according to AI ! ).

Ivan Illich Author of *Deschooling Society*

# Tools for Conviviality



World Perspectives

Edited by Ruth Nanda Anshen

## *Tools for Conviviality* (1973, 2015)

A convivial society is one where tools serve people, not where people serve tools.

Therefore, in a convivial society, AI should be regarded neither as an instructor nor a director but just a tool.

ヴァン・イリッチ

TOOLS  
FOR  
CONVIVIALITY

ヴァン・イリッチ

訳者 渡辺梨佐 訳

VAN ILLICH  
TRANSLATED BY  
KOJI WATANABE & RISA WATANABE

ちくま学芸文庫

# How to revive conviviality in the age of AI

The fundamental question today is how to breathe new life into the democratic project in a world and in societies that are significantly different from what they were in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

(cited from *Convivialisme ou barbarie Le Nouveau Manifeste covivialiste* )

To contribute to the new project above, I would like to compare two conflicting visions to make use of AI in the contemporary world.

**Peter Andreas  
Thiel (1967-)  
VS  
Audrey Tang  
(唐鳳 1981-)**



# **AI and the vision of techno-libertarian**

**Peter Thiel, who is the co-founder of PayPal and likely the most successful venture capitalist in Silicon Valley believes that he is on a mission to change the world through technology.**

**As a techno-libertarian, he doubts democratic values, human rights, fair welfare distribution, and lacks any sense of conviviality.**

**If such ideas and political approaches become unchecked and merge with authoritarian rule, humanity could move toward a period of barbarism.**

**As a matter of fact, he supports Trump's administration.**

# The Vision of digital democracy

One way to prevent this path to barbarism, in my view, would be to widely adopt the IT democracy advocated by Taiwanese programmer and politician Audrey Tang as a philosophy of conviviality in the age of IT.

Tang advocates digital democracy as a third way beyond libertarianism and technocracy.

For Audrey Tang, democracy is not just a voting system — it is a continuous, participatory, and technologically enabled process of collective intelligence.

# Audrey Tang and E. Glen Weyl (2024)

It is a democracy that aims for a society where people living within public relationships—neither as atomized individuals nor as masses—collaborate and coordinate, in spite of their disagreements, and promote imagination and aspirations.



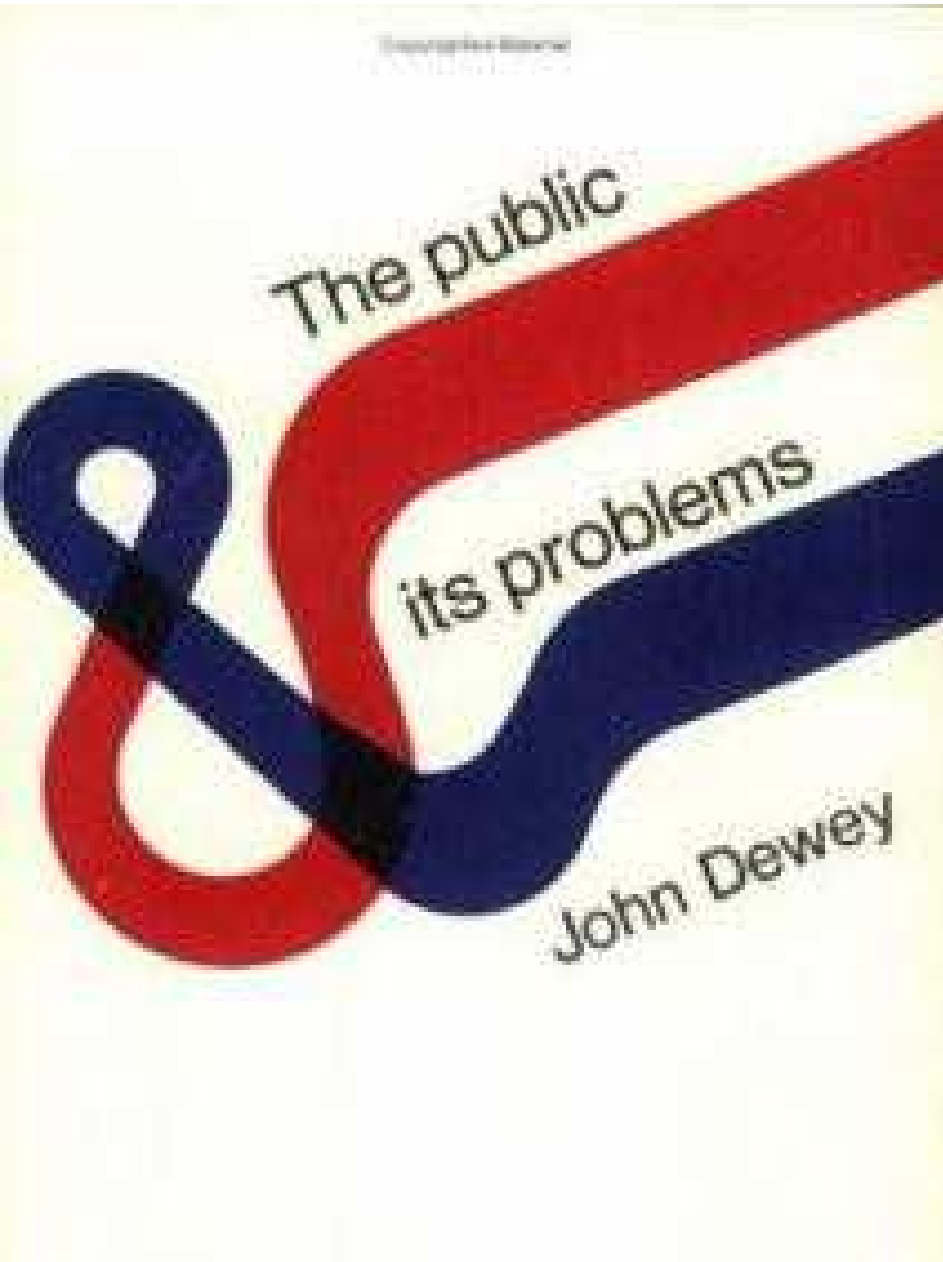
# **Importance of transparency**

**Democracy is a radically transparent, technology-enabled process of continuous public participation that harnesses collective intelligence to build consensus and trust.**

**Tang emphasizes “transparency makes trust”.**

**Instead of citizens trusting government blindly, transparency allows trust to emerge from openness.**

**From socio-philosophical viewpoint, Tang's ideas are based upon H. Arendt's concept of the publicness, G. Simmel's relational sociology, and most significantly, J. Dewey's concepts of democracy and the public.**



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***The public and its  
problems***  
**(1927)**

For Dewey, the public is not simply all the people in a society, but a group of people who are indirectly affected by the consequences of actions and who recognize those consequences as shared concerns.

# Great Community and Digital Democracy

According to Dewey, the ideas of liberty, equality and solidarity advanced in the French Revolution, must be innovated by the Great Community among the public in the Great Society.

He thought that the local activity of the public and its networks would become increasingly important to establish the Great Community.

Indeed, this idea advocated almost one century ago had great influences upon Tang's digital democracy.

(See *Plurality 3-2*, in Japanese translation pp.154-157.)

# Toward the Convivial Public Philosophy in the age of AI

If public philosophy is defined as the practice of bringing philosophical thinking into public life,  
public philosophy for conviviality in the age of AI must develop and spread (to the world) Tang's idea of digital democracy inspired by Dewey's idea as a countermovement opposed to techno-libertarian, authoritarian politics, irresponsible populism.

I am convinced many convivialists agree with my proposal.