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Editorial

FROM RASA TO ALGORITHMS: A PHILOSAFARI THROUGH TECHNOLOGY, ART AND CREATIVITY

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Art has always flourished along the pathways of imagination and invention. Every epoch of human civilization has expressed its aesthetic vision through the technological possibilities available to it. The chisel once shaped the world of sculpture; the printing press and photography transformed literature and visual representation; cinema expanded narrative imagination in ways previously unimaginable. In the twenty-first century, however, a *technologically driven metanoia* propelled by artificial intelligence, digital networks, immersive media and algorithmic systems reconfigures not only the tools of artistic production but also the very understanding of creativity itself. What, then, is creativity? It may be described as the capacity to reformulate the familiar into novel and meaningful forms. If this is so, it becomes fitting to examine how art is being transformed under technological influence. This inquiry unfolds as what the *Journal of Dharma* calls a *Philosafari*: a reflective journey into the inner caves of thought and imagination.

As prehistoric cave paintings make evident, art has always been more than technique; it is an existential gesture that seeks meaning, beauty and transcendence, while remaining historically conditioned by the technologies at hand. The Greek notion of *technē* already recognized the intrinsic link between artistic creativity and technical skill. Aristotle, in *Nicomachean Ethics*, described *technē* as a 'rational disposition concerned with production, through which intelligence transforms materials into meaningful form' (VI. 4–5). Technology has thus always been an extension of human creativity. Digital technologies, in particular, have dramatically expanded the horizons of artistic creation.

Contemporary artists employ computational tools, generative algorithms and digital interfaces that facilitate modes of experimentation beyond the limitations of traditional media. Generative art, algorithmic music composition and immersive installations illustrate how technological systems can extend human imagination. Marshall McLuhan's well-known insight that 'the medium is the message' remains strikingly relevant in this context. The technological medium through which art is produced does not simply transmit meaning; it actively conditions the ways in which aesthetic experience is structured and interpreted.

The emergence of artificial intelligence in creative practices introduces a new philosophical dimension to this relationship. Machine-learning systems can now generate images, musical compositions and textual narratives that resemble human artistic production. These developments challenge long-standing assumptions about authorship and originality. Immanuel Kant argued that artistic genius involves the capacity to produce aesthetic ideas that cannot be reduced to mechanical rules. Creativity, in his view, arises from the free interplay of imagination and understanding within the human mind. The increasing role of algorithmic systems, therefore, invites a paradigm shift: do such technologies genuinely create, or do they merely replicate patterns derived from human cultural memory?

This shift is examined philosophically in "The Algorithmic Gaze: AI and the Synthetic A Priori of Beauty" by Amitabh Vikram Dwivedi. Placing Kant in critical dialogue with contemporary AI systems, the article argues that while generative models can produce images humans judge beautiful, they do so without intentionality or genius. More significantly, Dwivedi shows that recommendation systems and platform feeds reorganize aesthetic visibility itself, shaping what becomes culturally normative. Beauty, therefore, is increasingly judged under technogenetic conditions where the aesthetic *a priori* is partially externalized into digital infrastructures. A complementary reflection appears in "Evolving Creativity Dynamics and Rethinking Art in the Era of Generative AI" by Sanket S. Revankar and Sanjyot D. Pai Vernekar. The authors

distinguish apparent from genuine creativity, arguing that AI participates in a distributed co-creativity where human intentionality remains primary. Their notion of 'prompt-creativity' highlights how authorship, labour and temporality are redefined, while raising urgent ethical concerns about dataset transparency and fair compensation in the infosphere. The ontological depth of this transformation is explored in "The Onto-Aesthetics of Code: Art, Technology and the Question of the Real" by Kishore Kumar K. P. Drawing on Heidegger, Baudrillard and Stiegler, the article proposes that code no longer merely mediates art but constitutes the very conditions of aesthetic experience. Digital art, therefore, inaugurates a new regime where simulation, recursion and interactivity redefine aura, embodiment and originality.

A second *Philosafari* leads into the cultural and ethical ecosystem where art now circulates. Walter Benjamin anticipated how reproduction transforms the aura of art; Michel Foucault showed how systems of discourse shape visibility and power; Luciano Floridi described our immersion in an infosphere where human and artificial agents interact. These insights find concrete illustration in two complementary studies from the Chinese context. In "Digital Music in Contemporary China: Cultural Transmission, Identity Formation and Social Cohesion" by Fenxian Liu, digital platforms and institutional responses are shown to mediate how musical heritage negotiates global reach while safeguarding local identity. Technology here becomes both a medium of dissemination and a site of cultural negotiation. This theme is extended in "Technological Mediation and Musical Creativity: Contemporary Chinese Music in Social Movements and Political Discourse" by Le Cheng. Through analysis of Chinese hip-hop, multilingual performance and artists such as the *Higher Brothers*, the article demonstrates how digitally mediated music becomes a subtle space for identity formation, indirect political expression and negotiation between tradition, censorship and globalization. Artistic interventions by figures such as Ai Weiwei further reveal how technology enables new forms of cultural and political voice within regulated environments.

Ethical tensions become even more vivid in "The Agogô in

the Technological Age: Ethical and Cultural Transformations among the Ika Society" by Ikechukwu Monday Osebor and Dora Ifeanyi Okunbor. The Agogô, a traditional Nigerian instrument sustaining the spiritual rhythm of community life, is documented and disseminated through technology, yet simultaneously risks commodification and cultural dilution. The authors propose a native-centric ethical framework ensuring that innovation remains accountable to heritage and community values.

At this point, a third *Philosafari* leads us beyond technological discourse into the philosophical resources of Indian ecological and aesthetic thought. Classical Indian theories of art, especially the concept of *rasa*, emphasize the experiential dimension of aesthetic appreciation. According to Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* and its influential interpretation by Abhinavagupta, the ultimate aim of art lies in evoking aesthetic relish (*rasa*) within human consciousness. This insight resonates powerfully in "The Role of Technology in Plant-Inspired Art and Creativity" by J. Joy Princy and M. Natarajan. Through biosensing installations, augmented reality and immersive digital environments, the article proposes a three-stage model—disconnection, reconciliation and balance—to show how technology can foster multispecies awareness rather than ecological alienation.

Rabindranath Tagore expressed a similar vision when he described art as an expression of humanity's quest for harmony with the universe. Creativity, for Tagore, arises from the dynamic encounter between individual imagination and the rhythms of life. Technological innovation must, therefore, remain conjoined with the ethical and spiritual aspirations that sustain human culture. Without such orientation, artistic production risks becoming a spectacle of technical novelty rather than a meaningful expression of human experience. The emergence of immersive technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality further transforms the relationship between art and its audience. These media create multisensory environments in which spectators become participants within the artistic experience. John Dewey's conception of art as experience provides a helpful philosophical framework here. For Dewey, art arises through the mutual interaction between creator, artwork

and perceiver. Interactive technologies extend this participatory dimension by transforming aesthetic engagement into exploratory encounter. Tagore's vision of art as harmony with the universe together with John Dewey's understanding of art as experience illuminate how immersive technologies transform spectators into participants.

All the articles in this issue collectively demonstrate that art becomes interactive, ecological, political, cultural and ontological—far beyond mere technical novelty. Yet, as Heidegger warned, technology can *enframe* human experience within instrumental efficiency. The speed and abundance of digital production may create aesthetic immediacy without corresponding contemplative depth. The contributors in this issue collectively caution against reducing creativity to algorithmic spectacle while showing how reflective engagement can transform technology into a partner of imagination. The following emerges as a key finding of their research: *The impact of technology on art is neither simply a boon nor a bane but a profound cultural transformation demanding philosophical discernment, ethical responsibility and cultural sensitivity*.

A final *Philosafari* into the inner caves of imagination reminds us that the ultimate source of creativity lies not in machines but in the depths of human consciousness. Technology may transform the instruments of artistic expression, yet the human longing for beauty, truth and the beatific vision remains the enduring foundation of art. The task before us, therefore, is not merely to innovate technologically but to cultivate the wisdom through which such innovation serves the flourishing of creativity, culture and the harmony of beings in the world we inhabit. In this unfolding dialogue between art and technology, the decisive question is not what machines can produce, but what kind of human beings we are becoming through them. Creativity, in this regard, must be safeguarded not simply as a 'machine-oriented capacity,' but as a 'moral, cultural and contemplative way of being' that preserves the depth of human experience. Only when technology remains accountable to wisdom can art continue to function as a medium where humanity encounters aesthetic taste. In this light, art becomes a critical platform within which

technological power is examined, interpreted and ethically shaped. The future of creativity will depend less on the sophistication of our instruments than on the depth of our capacity to perceive, to feel and to reflect.

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