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AI-Generated Art and Media: Ethical Quandaries and Creativity Beyond Anthropocentrism

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Abstract: Artificial intelligence fundamentally challenges the assumption that creativity has ever been exclusively human. By examining the transformative impact of AI on creativity, authorship, and authenticity within art and media, the study moves beyond dominant ethical concerns—such as intellectual property disputes, authorship ambiguity, and the deceptive potential of deepfakes—to demonstrate how AI fundamentally reconfigures creative practice. Drawing on philosophical frameworks from Benjamin, Barthes, Marx, and Baudrillard, and supported by case studies including Ai-Da, Mario Klingemann's Memories of Passersby I, AIVA's Genesis, and prompt-based systems such as Midjourney, the paper explores how AI disrupts human-centered definitions of creativity while expanding the conditions of artistic production. Adopting a qualitative, theory-driven case study methodology, the research demonstrates that creativity in the AI era emerges as a distributed process across human agents, algorithmic systems, and data infrastructures, rather than residing within a singular authorial subject. In this context, AI systems function not merely as tools of replication but as participants in generative processes that enable new aesthetic forms and hybrid modes of creation. At the same time, AI-driven tools contribute to the democratization of creative practice by lowering barriers to participation in cultural production. By integrating both critical and constructive perspectives, the paper advances a post-anthropocentric framework of creativity—one that positions AI not only as a source of ethical quandaries but as a catalyst for rethinking artistic production, authorship, and value in the age of algorithmic culture.

Keywords: AI-generated art; computational creativity; distributed creativity; algorithmic culture; AI ethics; post-anthropocentrism

1. Introduction

What AI disrupts is not creativity itself, but the assumption that creativity has ever belonged to the human alone. This provocation marks a decisive shift in how creativity must be understood in the context of artificial intelligence. For centuries, creativity has been theorized as a distinctly human capacity—anchored in consciousness, intentionality, and subjective experience. Within this paradigm, artistic production has been inseparable from the figure of the human creator, whose interiority guarantees both originality and authenticity. The emergence of artificial intelligence unsettles these assumptions by introducing systems capable of generating visual art, music, and synthetic media without consciousness or intention, thereby destabilizing the conceptual foundations upon which creativity has historically been defined.

Unlike traditional tools, which function as extensions of human agency, AI systems operate with a degree of autonomy that complicates their status within creative practice. They do not merely assist in production but participate in it, producing outputs that are often indistinguishable from human-created works. This shift raises a series of interrelated questions: can creativity be meaningfully attributed in the absence of subjective intention? What becomes of authorship when production is mediated by algorithmic processes? And how should artistic value be understood when the origin of creative output cannot be located within a singular human subject? These questions do not simply concern the capabilities of machines, but point to deeper tensions within the conceptual frameworks through which creativity has been historically understood.

At the level of cultural reception, AI-generated art reflects a growing yet ambivalent acceptance. A 2022 survey by Art Basel found that 65% of collectors were open to purchasing AI-generated art, while 45% expressed skepticism regarding its emotional depth (Art Basel, 2022). This ambivalence reveals a tension between market validation and aesthetic hesitation, where AI-generated works are simultaneously legitimized and questioned. Such responses indicate that the value of AI-generated art is not determined solely by its formal qualities, but is negotiated within broader cultural, institutional, and economic frameworks. Market developments further underscore the expanding role of AI within creative industries. The auction of Edmond de Belamy at Christie's in 2018, which sold for $432,500, marked an early moment of institutional recognition for AI-generated art (Christie's, 2018). More broadly, generative AI is projected to contribute between $2.6 and $4.4 trillion annually to the global economy (Vujović, 2024), signaling its integration into large-scale systems of production

and value creation. These developments suggest that AI is not simply an experimental tool within artistic practice, but a transformative force reshaping the economic and cultural infrastructures of art.

At the same time, AI-generated media complicates the epistemic status of representation in the digital age. Technologies such as deepfakes erode the evidentiary authority historically attributed to visual media, introducing uncertainty into the conditions under which truth can be established and verified. In this context, images no longer function as stable representations of reality but as computationally generated constructs, blurring the distinction between authenticity and fabrication. The implications of this shift extend beyond aesthetics to encompass broader concerns regarding trust, knowledge, and the reliability of media in algorithmically mediated environments. This paper argues that artificial intelligence not only challenges traditional notions of creativity, authorship, and authenticity, but fundamentally reconfigures them. Rather than viewing creativity as an exclusively human and intentional act, it proposes that creativity in the age of AI is not displaced but redistributed, emerging through interactions between human agents, algorithmic systems, and data infrastructures. In this sense, AI should be understood not merely as a disruptive force, but as a constitutive element of algorithmic culture that reshapes artistic production and meaning-making.

1.1 Ontological Gap Between Creator and Creation

The emergence of artificial intelligence in creative practice necessitates a rethinking of the ontological foundations upon which creativity has traditionally been defined. Classical aesthetic theory locates creativity within human consciousness, intentionality, and subjective experience, positioning it as an expression of interiority (Boden, 1990). However, AI systems are capable of generating complex and aesthetically compelling outputs without consciousness or intention, thereby destabilizing the assumption that creativity must originate in a self-aware subject. Rather than extending existing definitions, computational creativity reframes creativity as a system-level phenomenon grounded in processes such as recombination, probabilistic inference, and iterative optimization (Colton, 2012; Cohen, 2019). In this context, creativity is no longer adequately understood as an intrinsic human attribute, but as an emergent property of interactions between human input, algorithmic systems, and data structures.

This shift aligns with Hayles's (2017) account of nonconscious cognition, which situates meaning-making across distributed cognitive systems rather than within individual consciousness. AI-generated art, therefore, does not represent a diminished form of creativity but exposes the limitations of anthropocentric models that equate creativity with subjective experience. The distinction between human and machine creativity becomes less a boundary than a conceptual constraint inherited from earlier epistemological frameworks. Within contemporary algorithmic culture (Manovich, 2019), creativity is increasingly mediated by computational infrastructures that shape not only production but also circulation and interpretation. As a result, authorship becomes difficult to locate within a singular origin. Barthes' (1967) "death of the author" is not merely theorized but materially instantiated in AI-generated art, where intentionality is structurally displaced. Creative production emerges through distributed processes in which human and non-human agents are interdependent.

This ontological instability also reveals tensions within existing legal frameworks, which remain grounded in individual authorship. Contemporary disputes—such as those involving training data and AI-generated outputs—underscore the difficulty of attributing ownership within systems where no singular origin can be identified. These tensions do not simply indicate regulatory gaps; they point to a deeper incompatibility between anthropocentric models of creativity and the realities of algorithmic production. The challenge, therefore, is not whether AI can replicate human creativity, but whether creativity itself must be reconceptualized. Under conditions of AI-mediated production, creativity emerges as a relational and technologically mediated process, rather than an exclusively human capacity.

While the ontological status of creativity is destabilized by AI's generative capacities, these transformations extend beyond production into the domain of representation itself. Nowhere is this more evident than in deepfake technologies, where the question is no longer who creates, but whether what is seen can be trusted.

1.2 Deepfakes and the Ethics of Truth: Epistemic Challenges

Deepfake technologies represent a critical site at which the epistemological foundations of media are not merely challenged but fundamentally reconfigured. By enabling the production of hyper-realistic synthetic audiovisual content, deepfakes collapse the distinction between representation and fabrication, thereby undermining the evidentiary status historically attributed to visual media (Chesney & Citron, 2019). Rather than simply introducing new forms of deception,

these technologies destabilize the conditions under which truth is established, verified, and trusted. In this sense, deepfakes exemplify a broader transformation within algorithmic culture, wherein computational systems do not merely mediate reality but actively participate in its production. At stake in this transformation is a structural erosion of epistemic trust. Visual media have traditionally functioned as privileged instruments of verification—captured in the enduring assumption that "the camera never lies"—and have underpinned domains such as journalism, legal adjudication, and public discourse. The proliferation of deepfakes disrupts this function by introducing a condition in which the authenticity of any visual artifact can be plausibly contested. Chesney and Citron's (2019) concept of the "liar's dividend" is particularly instructive here, as it describes how the existence of synthetic media enables the strategic dismissal of genuine evidence as fabricated. The resulting crisis is not reducible to isolated instances of deception; rather, it signals a breakdown in the criteria through which truth claims are recognized and validated.

This shift can be further situated within Baudrillard's (1981) account of hyperreality. In a hyperreal regime, representations cease to refer to an external reality and instead operate as autonomous systems of simulation. Deepfakes instantiate this condition by producing images that are perceptually indistinguishable from reality while lacking any necessary referential grounding. The consequence is not merely a blurring of the boundary between the real and the artificial, but its systematic erosion. Visual media, in this context, no longer function as indices of reality; they generate internally coherent simulations that displace the need for external verification. The ethical implications of this epistemic transformation extend beyond individual harm to encompass broader socio-political consequences. From a Kantian perspective, the creation and circulation of deepfakes without consent constitute a violation of autonomy, insofar as individuals are reduced to means within representational systems they do not control (Kant, 1785/1993). At the same time, the destabilization of epistemic trust poses significant challenges to democratic processes. Habermas' (1989) conception of the public sphere presupposes the availability of shared and reliable information as a condition for rational-critical debate. Deepfakes undermine this condition by introducing systemic uncertainty into the circulation of information. However, a strictly negative account risks oversimplifying the role of deepfake technologies. As Coeckelbergh (2020) argues, the ethical significance of artificial intelligence emerges relationally through interactions between technological systems, human practices, and institutional contexts. Deepfakes, therefore, cannot be understood solely as instruments of deception; their ethical status depends on the conditions of their production and use. Indeed, related techniques are already embedded within legitimate media practices, including digital de-aging, synthetic voice generation, and experimental or satirical forms of audiovisual production. These applications demonstrate that deepfake technologies also operate within the domain of computational creativity.

If deepfakes destabilize the conditions under which truth can be verified, they also unsettle the criteria through which authenticity and value are assigned. When representation can no longer reliably index reality, authenticity can no longer be grounded in origin or evidentiary certainty. The problem therefore shifts from epistemology to aesthetics: from whether something is true to how it is recognized as meaningful, authentic, or valuable. This shift forms the basis for a reconsideration of artistic value in AI-mediated contexts.

1.3 Rethinking Value and Authenticity in the Age of Machine Creativity

Walter Benjamin's (1936) concept of "aura," often invoked in discussions of technological reproduction, remains central to debates on authenticity in AI-generated art. However, as the preceding discussion of deepfakes demonstrates, the conditions that once grounded authenticity in presence, origin, and evidentiary reliability have been fundamentally destabilized. From this perspective, AI-generated works may appear to lack authenticity insofar as they are produced through algorithmic processes rather than human intentionality. However, such a view presupposes that authenticity must necessarily derive from human subjectivity. A more productive approach is to consider how AI reconfigures, rather than negates, aura—shifting its basis from the presence of the artist to the conditions of production, including algorithmic systems, data structures, and modes of interaction. This reorientation aligns with Danto's (1964) "artworld" theory, which emphasizes the role of institutional and discursive contexts in constituting artistic value. The growing acceptance of AI-generated works within galleries, auctions, and critical discourse indicates that their value is not diminished by the absence of human authorship, but is instead negotiated through systems of recognition and validation. AI-generated art, therefore, does not exist outside established frameworks of valuation; rather, it exposes their underlying dependence on cultural and institutional mediation.

Within this context, authorship becomes increasingly diffuse, complicating its function as the primary locus of artistic value. Rather than originating from individual intention, value emerges through interconnected processes of generation, curation, and reception, involving both human and computational agents. This shift does not eliminate authorship but redistributes it across a network of relations, thereby destabilizing traditional assumptions that equate artistic worth with singular creative origin. The implications of this transformation extend beyond aesthetics into the socio-economic domain. From a Marxist perspective, the capacity of AI systems to generate cultural production raises concerns regarding the reconfiguration of creative labor and the commodification of artistic processes. At the same time, Bourdieu's (1984) concept of cultural capital underscores that artistic value has always been shaped by institutional hierarchies and access to resources. AI-generated art intensifies these dynamics: while it lowers barriers to creative participation, it simultaneously concentrates power among those who control technological infrastructures and data.

Questions of emotional resonance further complicate evaluative frameworks. Critiques that position AI-generated art as lacking emotional depth rely on the assumption that affective value originates from the creator's subjective experience. However, as Carroll (2001) argues, the significance of art lies in its capacity to elicit responses from audiences, regardless of authorial intent. From this perspective, AI-generated works remain capable of producing aesthetic and emotional engagement, even in the absence of consciousness. Accordingly, existing evaluative frameworks—particularly those privileging originality, intentionality, and expressive authenticity—are insufficient for addressing AI-mediated production. Proceduralist approaches (Davies, 2004), which emphasize the processes and systems through which artworks are generated, offer a more adequate framework. Such approaches foreground algorithmic design, data curation, and human–machine interaction as constitutive elements of artistic practice, thereby aligning evaluation with the conditions under which contemporary art is produced.

These theoretical disruptions—spanning ontology, epistemology, and value—necessitate a structured approach to analysis. To critically engage with these shifts, the study now defines its key objectives and details the interdisciplinary methodology through which AI-generated art is examined.

2. Objectives and Methodology

This research paper is guided by the following objectives:

1. To critically examine the transformative impact of AI-generated art on creativity, authorship, and authenticity in art and media.
2. To analyze the ethical implications of AI-generated content within contemporary media environments.
3. To examine how AI reshapes frameworks of artistic value and authenticity.
4. To conceptualize creativity as a distributed and networked process in the age of artificial intelligence.
5. To integrate critical and constructive perspectives on AI in creative practice.

This study adopts a qualitative, theory-driven approach grounded in interdisciplinary perspectives from philosophy, media studies, and critical theory. It is guided by a framework of distributed creativity, which conceptualizes creative agency as emerging from interactions between human actors, computational systems, and data infrastructures. The research employs a conceptual and interpretive analysis, drawing on key theoretical frameworks (e.g., Benjamin, Barthes, Baudrillard, Marx, and Hayles) to examine the ontological, ethical, and economic dimensions of AI-generated art. To substantiate this analysis, a purposive case study approach is employed. Each case is selected to illuminate a specific dimension of AI-mediated creativity: Ai-Da is examined in relation to authorship and posthuman artistic agency; GAN-based art (e.g., Klingemann) illustrates generative autonomy and algorithmic production; AIVA highlights questions of intentionality and machine-assisted composition in music; and deepfake technologies are analyzed for their ethical and epistemological implications, particularly concerning authenticity and trust.

The analysis is interpretive, using these cases to generate theoretical insights into how creativity, value, and authorship are reconfigured within contemporary algorithmic culture.

3. Case Studies

3.1 Ai-Da- creativity beyond the human paradigm

Ai-Da, named after Ada Lovelace, represents a significant convergence of artificial intelligence and artistic practice. Developed through a collaboration between Aidan Meller, Engineered Arts, and researchers from the University of Oxford, Ai-Da is widely recognized as the first ultra-realistic humanoid robot artist. Equipped with computer vision, robotic arms, and machine learning systems, she produces drawings, paintings, and installations that engage directly with questions of creativity, authorship, and technological mediation. Rather than interpreting Ai-Da's practice through the absence of human attributes such as consciousness or intention, it is more analytically productive to situate her within a framework of distributed creativity. Her works emerge from the interaction of programmers, datasets, robotic systems, and algorithmic processes, challenging the assumption that artistic production can be attributed to a singular authorial subject. In this sense, Ai-Da does not replace human creativity but reconfigures it across a socio-technical network.

The growing institutional and market recognition of Ai-Da's work further underscores this shift. The sale of A.I. God: Portrait of Alan Turing (2021) at Sotheby's in 2024 marked a notable moment in the legitimization of AI-generated art within established art markets. However, the significance of such events lies less in their monetary value than in their role in rearticulating the conditions under which artistic value is produced and recognized. Ai-Da's work is not validated despite its non-human origin, but through the very systems—technological, institutional, and discursive—that constitute contemporary art worlds. Ai-Da's practice also foregrounds the visibility of the infrastructures underlying creative production. What appears as machinic autonomy is inseparable from layers of human and technical mediation, including coding, data selection, and curatorial framing. This complicates attempts to locate authorship exclusively in either the human or the machine, suggesting instead that creative agency is distributed across these interacting elements.

By situating artistic production within this broader assemblage, Ai-Da exemplifies a shift from individual authorship toward relational models of creativity. Her work does not simply challenge the boundaries of art; it exposes the assumptions that have historically defined creativity as an exclusively human domain.

Figure 1: Ai-Da standing beside her painting "A.I. God: Portrait of Alan Turing." (Designboom, 2024)

3.2 DeepDream and GAN Art – Mario Klingemann's Memories of Passersby I (2019)

The development of Google's DeepDream algorithm and Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) marked a significant shift in AI-driven art, raising important questions about how creative works are produced and attributed. DeepDream, launched in 2015, employs neural networks to detect and amplify patterns in images, generating surreal, dreamlike visuals that have captivated audiences and expanded artistic possibilities. GANs, developed in 2014 by Ian Goodfellow, advanced the field further by utilizing dual neural networks—a generator and a discriminator—to create

increasingly realistic and "original" images. In 2019, Mario Klingemann, a trailblazer in AI-generated art, created Memories of Passersby I using GANs. This groundbreaking installation featured an AI system continuously generating unique, non-existent portraits of people in real-time. It became one of the earliest AI artworks to be auctioned at Sotheby's, selling for £40,000, or approximately $52,500 USD at the time, signaling a pivotal moment in the commercialization of AI-driven art (Sotheby's Auction Results, 2019). The economic trajectory of AI-generated art underscores its rapid evolution.

The global generative AI art market was valued at $298 million in 2023 and is expected to experience exponential growth, reaching $8.2 billion by 2033, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 40.5% from 2024 to 2033 (Generative AI in Art Market, 2024). This growth reflects the increasing demand for AI-generated art in various industries, including advertising, entertainment, and fine arts, where AI systems are used to create visually engaging and conceptually innovative pieces. Mario Klingemann's Memories of Passersby I offers a compelling lens for exploring the implications of AI in creative fields. This continuous generation of images illustrates a model of creativity that is temporally open-ended and non-authorial, reinforcing the notion that creative output can emerge independently of fixed human intention. Moreover, the commercial success of AI-generated artworks highlights the need for clear ethical guidelines and regulatory frameworks to navigate issues of copyright, ownership, and cultural impact. Surveys of art collectors reveal that 68% consider AI art a promising investment, while 52% believe it will reshape traditional art markets by 2030 (Art Market Trends, 2023). Through works like Klingemann's, AI-generated art continues to expand the boundaries of creativity, presenting exciting opportunities and complex challenges that demand ongoing scrutiny from artists, philosophers, and

policymakers alike.

Figure 2: Mario Klingemann's Memories of Passersby (New Scientist, 2019)

This shift is further extended by prompt-based generative systems such as Midjourney, where users engage in the creative process through textual prompts, thereby reconfiguring artistic production as an interaction between linguistic input, algorithmic interpretation, and visual output. Such systems foreground the participatory and distributed nature of contemporary computational creativity.

3.3 Genesis: AIVA's Breakthrough in AI-Driven Music Composition

AIVA (Artificial Intelligence Virtual Artist) is a pioneering AI music composition tool capable of creating original works in diverse musical genres. Released in 2016, Genesis marked the debut of AIVA (Artificial Intelligence Virtual Artist)

as an AI-driven composer, demonstrating its capacity to autonomously create classical music compositions. This album represented a landmark achievement for artificial intelligence in the arts, as AIVA became the first virtual composer to be registered with SACEM (Society of Authors, Composers, and Publishers of Music). By producing Genesis, AIVA took a significant step toward the integration of artificial intelligence into the creative industries, redefining the boundaries of machine-generated artistry in the domain of classical music. AIVA's compositions are frequently used in commercial applications, with its works praised for their complexity, emotional depth, and stylistic versatility. As on 2023, AIVA had generated over 20,000 unique music compositions, with a notable 35% of these used in commercial projects spanning advertisements, short films, and video games (AIVA Technologies, 2023). While AIVA's compositions are informed by extensive training data, they should not be understood solely as derivative, but as instances of computational recombination that generate new aesthetic configurations, thereby complicating traditional distinctions between originality and imitation. This dependence on prior art underscores ongoing debates around whether AI can truly innovate or merely reinterpret.

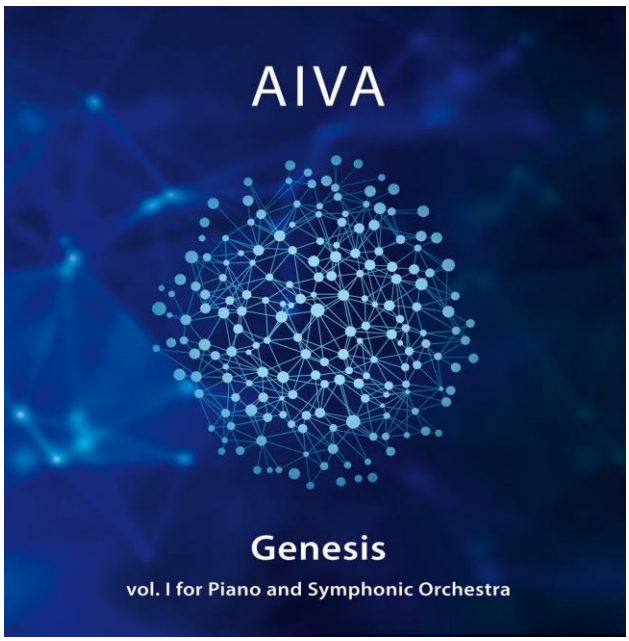

Figure 4: Album cover of Genesis by AIVA (AIVA, 2016)

The compositions in Genesis were created using AIVA's extensive training on dataset of thousands of musical works, including works by eminent composers such as Beethoven, Mozart, and Bach. This comprehensive dataset equipped AIVA with an intricate understanding of musical elements, such as harmony, melody, rhythm, and orchestration, enabling the AI to replicate stylistic nuances effectively. Leveraging deep learning and reinforcement learning algorithms, AIVA analyzed these patterns to generate original compositions tailored to specific emotional contexts. Throughout the process, professional musicians and composers reviewed AIVA's outputs, providing feedback to enhance the structural coherence and emotional resonance of the generated music. AIVA's achievements extend beyond technical accomplishments, as they challenge foundational concepts in intellectual property law. By autonomously creating and securing copyrights for its music, AIVA redefines authorship and raises questions about whether creativity is inherently human. Globally, AI-generated content is expected to account for 8% of the digital music industry by 2030, projected to generate revenue exceeding $1 billion annually (Global AI Music Report, 2022). As AI-generated music becomes increasingly prevalent, AIVA's role illustrates the reconfiguration of creativity and authorship within distributed, human–machine systems.

The compositions within Genesis adhered closely to classical traditions, effectively evoking a variety of emotional responses, including grandeur, tranquility, and melancholy. Tracks such as "On the Edge of the Abyss" and the title piece "Genesis" received critical acclaim for their technical sophistication and emotional depth. Critics noted that the album's compositions rivaled human-created works in their complexity and aesthetic appeal. However, some skepticism persisted regarding the originality of the pieces, as they were derived from patterns present in the training data. From a technical standpoint, Genesis exemplified the potential of artificial intelligence to create market-ready, aesthetically pleasing music

efficiently. The album demonstrated how AI could reduce the time and resources required for music composition. Genesis demonstrated the potential for collaborative workflows between AI systems and human creators, blending human intuition with computational precision to achieve innovative artistic outcomes.

3.4 Deepfake Technology—The Tom Cruise TikTok Deepfakes (2021)

The emergence of the "DeepTomCruise" TikTok videos in 2021 provides a widely cited and analytically rich example of the perceptual and epistemic implications of deepfake technologies. Created by visual effects specialist Chris Ume in collaboration with actor Miles Fisher, these videos depict a hyper-realistic simulation of Tom Cruise performing mundane activities such as magic tricks and casual interactions. Circulating rapidly across social media platforms, the videos amassed over 30 million views within weeks (TikTok Analytics, 2021), demonstrating both the accessibility and viral potential of synthetic media within contemporary digital environments. DeepTomCruise videos exemplify a shift from indexical representation to computational simulation, where the credibility of an image is no longer grounded in its connection to reality but in its perceptual coherence. This reconfiguration aligns with broader transformations in algorithmic media, in which synthetic outputs are increasingly indistinguishable from recorded reality.

The ethical implications of the DeepTomCruise videos further complicate their status as creative artifacts. Although the videos were transparently presented as deepfakes, they nonetheless involved the simulation of a recognizable public figure without direct consent, raising concerns regarding identity, likeness, and control over representation. Such concerns are not limited to high-profile individuals; studies indicate that 96% of deepfakes online involve non-consensual uses, including exploitative or harmful content (Sensity AI, 2023). At the same time, public perception reflects growing unease regarding the broader societal impact of such technologies, with 47% of Americans expressing concern about their use in political manipulation and 66% identifying them as a threat to national security (Pew Research Center, 2022).

The economic dimensions of deepfake technologies further underscore their integration into contemporary systems of digital production. Fraudulent uses of deepfakes resulted in estimated global losses of $250 million in 2022, with projections indicating continued growth as the technology becomes more accessible (Cybersecurity Ventures, 2023). These developments highlight the extent to which synthetic media operate not only within cultural and aesthetic domains but also within economic and infrastructural systems shaped by algorithmic production and circulation. The Tom Cruise deepfakes thus exemplify a broader transformation in the status of visual media. They do not merely demonstrate the potential for deception, but reveal a shift in the conditions under which images are interpreted, trusted, and valued. As with other AI-driven systems, their significance lies in exposing the limitations of frameworks that rely on stable distinctions between authenticity and fabrication.

Figure 5 : @deeptomcruise ("Chris Ume on Instagram: "#deeptomcruise likes a well fed crew!!! @milesfisher"," 2021)

Taken together, these case studies reveal distinct ways in which AI reorganizes creative practice across domains. Ai-Da emphasizes embodied collaboration, Klingemann foregrounds continuous generation, AIVA operates within established aesthetic forms, and deepfakes shift the focus to perceptual simulation. Rather than pointing to a single model, these variations highlight how creative processes are differently structured across contexts. The following section therefore moves beyond individual cases to examine how creative agency itself is redefined within these systems.

4. Reconfiguring Anthropocentric Creativity in the Age of AI

Rather than reiterating the displacement of human-centered models of creativity, this section examines its implications for how creative agency is theorized and practiced. The critical question shifts from who creates to how creative processes are structured, mediated, and operationalized within AI-driven environments. AI does not eliminate authorship; it renders it irreducibly distributed across human and non-human systems. Creativity is thus understood as a system of relations shaped by technical architectures, interfaces, and modes of interaction, requiring analysis of how human and machine contributions are coordinated and rendered meaningful in contemporary cultural production.

This transformation is exemplified by prompt-based generative systems such as Midjourney, in which creative output emerges through iterative exchanges between textual prompts and algorithmic interpretation. In these systems, the role of the artist is reconfigured: rather than directly producing the artwork, the user mediates the generative process through linguistic input. Creativity thus operates as a process of interaction and modulation, expanding access to artistic production while situating agency within the interplay between human input and computational systems.

Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of rhizomatic structures offers a productive framework for understanding these developments. AI systems operate through non-linear, decentralized processes that generate outputs via pattern recognition and recombination across vast datasets. Such processes resist hierarchical models of authorship, foregrounding multiplicity, connectivity, and emergence. Creativity becomes dispersed across interacting systems, challenging the enduring figure of the individual "genius artist." Similarly, Derrida's (1967) notion of différance—the relational production of meaning—resonates with AI-generated outputs, which emerge through iterative variation rather than fixed intention. This suggests that meaning in AI-mediated art is not anchored in authorial origin but emerges through processes of generation and interpretation, thereby reinforcing a shift toward relational and interpretive models of creativity.

4.1 Ai-Da and the Posthuman Turn in Creative Agency

Ai-Da's artistic practice does not extend human creativity so much as it exposes the inadequacy of locating creative agency within an individual subject. The attribution of authorship—to either the human programmer or the machine—fails to account for the distributed conditions under which the work is produced. Creative agency, in this context, emerges through the coordinated interaction of technical systems, human interventions, and institutional frameworks. It is neither transferred from human to machine nor contained within either, but distributed across a socio-technical assemblage. Braidotti's (2013) posthumanism provides a critical framework for understanding this shift, insofar as it displaces the human as the exclusive locus of meaning-making. However, Ai-Da does not simply instantiate a posthuman condition; it renders visible the infrastructures—data, code, design, and curation—through which creative production is organized. What appears as machinic autonomy is in fact inseparable from these layered mediations, thereby complicating any clear distinction between authorship and execution.

This configuration places pressure on phenomenological accounts of creativity grounded in lived experience. Heidegger's (1927) concept of Dasein presupposes that meaning arises from situated, embodied existence; yet Ai-Da's outputs remain culturally intelligible without such grounding. The implication is not that machines replicate human creativity, but that creativity itself cannot be reduced to subjective intentionality. Rather, it must be understood as emerging from interactions between human and non-human actors within structured environments. Crucially, this redistribution does not eliminate the human but repositions it. Human agency persists in the interpretation, contextualization, and valuation of the work, even as production is technologically mediated. Creativity, therefore, becomes a distributed process in which human and machine contributions are interdependent rather than oppositional.

If creative agency is no longer anchored in a singular subject, the problem shifts from authorship to operation: not who creates, but how creativity is enacted within systems where production is partially automated. This shift becomes particularly visible in generative systems such as Klingemann's.

4.2 Mario Klingemann's Memories of Passersby I: Computational Creativity and the Decentering of Artistic Agency

In Memories of Passersby I, the artwork no longer exists as a discrete object but as an ongoing generative process. Creativity is not expressed through the production of individual images, but through the design of a system that continuously produces variation. The locus of artistic practice is thus displaced from the creation of artifacts to the structuring of generative conditions. Stiegler's (1998) account of technics as the exteriorization of memory illuminates this transformation. The generative system functions as a technical apparatus that automates processes of variation, recombination, and differentiation—processes historically associated with human cognition. However, rather than displacing human creativity, this reconfiguration redistributes it: creative agency operates both in the construction of the system and in the selection and interpretation of its outputs.

Within this framework, originality can no longer be grounded in the production of a singular, unprecedented object. Instead, it emerges relationally through acts of selection, filtering, and contextualization within a field of proliferating possibilities. Creativity becomes a matter of navigation—of identifying and assigning significance within an expanded generative space. This shift is not merely technical but cultural. It transforms the criteria through which artistic value is recognized, displacing emphasis from production to evaluation and from authorship to interpretation. The human role, while no longer centered on making, remains central to meaning-making. Benjamin's (1936) concept of aura is consequently reconfigured. Aura no longer resides in the singularity of the object, but in the conditions of its generation and its positioning within cultural and institutional frameworks. Value emerges not from origin, but from relational processes of production and reception.

Yet if originality can be sustained without singular production, a more fundamental question arises: whether creativity itself depends on intention, or whether meaningful forms can emerge independently of it. This question becomes unavoidable in systems such as AIVA.

4.3 AIVA's Score Genesis: Emotional Resonance and Intentionality

AIVA's Genesis challenges the assumption that intentionality is a necessary condition for meaningful artistic production. While traditional aesthetic frameworks locate creativity in the expressive intentions of an author, AIVA demonstrates that structurally coherent and affectively resonant compositions can be generated through computational processes without consciousness or subjective experience. Cope's (2005) theory of musical intelligence reframes creativity as a function of pattern recognition and structural organization rather than expressive intent. AIVA operationalizes this logic, generating compositions that adhere to established stylistic conventions while introducing novel variations. These outputs complicate distinctions between originality and derivation, occupying a space in which creativity emerges from recombination rather than intention.

However, the absence of intentionality at the level of production does not result in an absence of meaning. As Carroll (2001) argues, aesthetic value is realized through audience engagement. Meaning is not transmitted from an originating subject but produced through interpretation. In this sense, human agency remains indispensable—not as creator, but as interpreter and evaluator. What is at stake, therefore, is not simply the removal of intention, but a reconfiguration of how meaning is constituted. Creativity persists as a distributed process: computational systems generate forms, while human actors assign significance within cultural contexts.

Once meaning is no longer anchored in intention, its stability as a category becomes uncertain. This uncertainty extends beyond artistic production to representation itself, where the relationship between image and reality is no longer secure—an instability most evident in deepfake technologies.

4.4 Deepfakes and the Epistemological Reconfiguration of Media

Deepfake technologies extend the implications of AI-mediated creativity into the epistemological domain of representation. Unlike other generative systems, deepfakes do not merely produce new artifacts; they simulate reality with such precision that the distinction between representation and fabrication becomes increasingly unstable. Baudrillard's

(1981) concept of hyperreality is instructive here, as it captures a condition in which representations no longer refer to an external reality but operate as self-sustaining systems of simulation. In the case of deepfakes, images no longer function as indices of the real; they generate their own conditions of plausibility, thereby undermining the evidentiary status historically attributed to visual media.

This transformation produces a condition of epistemic instability. If images can no longer be relied upon as carriers of truth, then the criteria through which authenticity is established must be re-evaluated. The issue is not merely the potential for deception, but a structural shift in how truth is constituted and recognized. At the same time, this shift remains embedded within the dynamics of distributed creativity. Deepfakes are produced through interactions between datasets, algorithms, and human inputs, while their meaning and impact depend on interpretation, circulation, and reception. The instability they introduce is therefore both technological and cultural.

In this context, representation can no longer be understood as a reflection of reality, but as a computationally mediated construct shaped by interactions between human and non-human agents. The implications extend beyond media to the broader conditions under which knowledge, trust, and meaning are collectively negotiated.

5. Reconfiguring Marxist Perspective of Labor and Value and Cultural Production

The integration of artificial intelligence into creative industries necessitates not merely a reconsideration of creativity, but a critical re-evaluation of labor, value, and cultural production. While earlier sections have established that creativity operates as a distributed process across human and computational systems, the question that follows is how such distribution reorganizes the conditions under which labor is performed, recognized, and commodified.

From a Marxist perspective, AI-generated art does not eliminate labor but renders it less visible. The apparent autonomy of AI systems obscures the extensive human labor embedded within their operation, including data curation, software development, and infrastructural maintenance. This displacement of labor reflects a transformation in the mode of production, in which value is increasingly attributed to technological systems and their outputs rather than to the social relations that sustain them. At the same time, cultural production within algorithmic environments is characterized by a shift from object-based to system-based value. Artistic worth is no longer derived solely from the creation of discrete works, but from the capacity to generate, circulate, and scale cultural content. This reconfiguration complicates traditional distinctions between labor and tool, as creative production becomes distributed across socio-technical networks in which human and machine contributions are interdependent.

5.1 Ai-Da's A.I. God: Commodification and Alienation of Creativity

The sale of A.I. God for over $1 million reflects a transformation in how artistic value is produced within algorithmically mediated markets. Rather than being grounded in individual authorship or expressive intention, the value of the work emerges through its positioning within networks of technological innovation, institutional validation, and media attention. From a Marxist perspective, this development reveals a form of commodification that extends beyond the artwork itself to encompass the conditions of its production. While the work is attributed to a robotic artist, its creation depends upon a distributed assemblage of human labor, including programmers, engineers, and data curators. This labor, however, is not directly visible within the final product, resulting in a form of abstraction that obscures the social relations underlying its production.

In this sense, AI-generated art intensifies Marx's (1844) concept of alienation. Creative labor is not only separated from the worker but dispersed across systems in ways that make it difficult to identify, attribute, or value. At the same time, the commodification of AI-generated works reflects a broader shift in cultural production, where technological systems themselves become sites of value extraction. Ai-Da's A.I. God thus exemplifies how creativity, labor, and value are reconfigured within algorithmic economies, where the visibility of human contribution is diminished even as its necessity persists.

5.2 Memories of Passersby I: Market Dynamics and Institutional Endorsement

The integration of Memories of Passersby I into institutional and market contexts signals a shift in how artistic value is constructed and legitimized. Its exhibition and sale demonstrate that AI-generated works are not positioned outside

existing art systems, but are incorporated into them through processes of institutional recognition and endorsement. However, the generative nature of the work introduces a tension within traditional market logics. Unlike conventional artworks, which derive value from scarcity and singularity, Klingemann's installation produces an ongoing stream of images, challenging the notion of the artwork as a fixed object. In this context, value is displaced from the individual artifact to the system that produces it.

This shift aligns with broader transformations in cultural economies, where value is increasingly associated with platforms, infrastructures, and generative capacities rather than discrete products. From a Marxist perspective, this reflects a reconfiguration of value production, in which ownership and control over systems of generation become more significant than individual acts of creation. At the same time, institutional endorsement plays a crucial role in stabilizing the value of such works. As Danto (1964) suggests, the "artworld" functions as a site of validation, enabling AI-generated art to be recognized as culturally legitimate despite its divergence from traditional forms. Memories of Passersby I therefore illustrates how value, authorship, and legitimacy are co-constructed through interactions between technological systems and institutional frameworks.

5.3 AIVA's Genesis: Intentionality and the Reconfiguration of Creative Labor

AIVA's Genesis foregrounds a transformation in the organization of creative labor, particularly within contexts where production is increasingly automated. While traditional models of composition emphasize individual authorship and intentional expression, AIVA demonstrates that complex musical works can be generated through computational processes operating at scale. From a Marxist perspective, this does not signal the disappearance of creative labor, but its reorganization. The production of AI-generated music depends upon a distributed network of contributors, including developers, data curators, and human evaluators who shape and refine outputs. Labor is thus embedded within the system rather than expressed through a singular act of creation.

This reconfiguration also alters the criteria through which value is assigned. In commercial contexts, attributes such as efficiency, scalability, and adaptability become central, reflecting a shift toward forms of production aligned with broader logics of capital. Human creators are consequently repositioned within these systems, functioning less as sole authors and more as collaborators or curators within algorithmic processes. At the same time, the persistence of audience interpretation underscores that human engagement remains central to meaning-making. While production is technologically mediated, value is realized through reception, reinforcing the distributed nature of creativity across both production and interpretation. Genesis thus exemplifies how AI reconfigures not only the process of creation but the conditions under which creative labor is organized and valued.

5.4 Deepfake Technologies: Commodification, Identity, and Epistemic Instability

Deepfake technologies extend the logic of AI-mediated production into the domain of identity, introducing new forms of commodification that operate on human likeness itself. Unlike other forms of AI-generated art, deepfakes do not simply produce cultural artifacts; they replicate and manipulate recognizable identities, transforming them into reproducible digital assets. From a political-economic perspective, this represents an intensification of commodification, in which identity becomes subject to processes of extraction, circulation, and exchange. The ability to generate synthetic representations without consent raises significant concerns regarding ownership and control, particularly as such content becomes integrated into broader media economies.

At the same time, deepfakes expose a structural asymmetry within algorithmic culture. While their production relies on distributed networks of human and computational inputs, responsibility for their consequences is often diffuse. This complicates traditional frameworks of accountability, particularly in cases involving misinformation, exploitation, or harm. Moreover, the epistemic instability introduced by deepfakes has economic implications, as the erosion of trust in visual media affects systems of communication, governance, and exchange. In this sense, deepfakes do not merely challenge authenticity; they reconfigure the conditions under which value, truth, and representation are collectively negotiated.

6. Intellectual Property in the Age of Algorithmic Culture

If AI-mediated creativity is understood as emerging through distributed and processual systems rather than discrete acts of individual authorship, then the continued reliance of intellectual property law on notions of singular origin,

intentional creation, and bounded works becomes increasingly difficult to sustain. The challenges posed by AI-generated art are therefore not solely regulatory, but also conceptual, as existing legal frameworks presuppose conditions of creativity that may not fully correspond to contemporary modes of production (Gervais, 2020; McCutcheon, 2022). In this context, intellectual property law appears to encounter growing difficulty in accommodating the forms of production associated with AI-mediated creativity (Andersen, 2023). These tensions are reflected in current legal and policy developments. For example, the U.S. Copyright Office has reaffirmed the requirement of human authorship for copyright protection, while regulatory initiatives such as the European Union's AI Act emphasize transparency and accountability without fully resolving questions of ownership and authorship (U.S. Copyright Office, 2023; European Parliament, 2024). Such responses suggest that while existing frameworks are being extended, they continue to operate within conceptual boundaries that may not fully capture the dynamics of AI-generated production.

Rather than readily adapting to AI-generated outputs, these frameworks reveal certain limitations. Legal categories such as authorship, ownership, and originality remain grounded in assumptions of identifiable creators and traceable acts of creation. By contrast, AI-generated works arise from layered processes involving datasets, model architectures, and user interaction, none of which can be easily identified as a definitive point of origin. As a result, intellectual property law is confronted less with straightforward ambiguity than with a gradual reconfiguration of the assumptions upon which it has traditionally relied.

6.1 Ownership in the Absence of Origin

The attribution of ownership within intellectual property law has traditionally depended on the identification of an originating subject. Under conditions of AI-mediated production, however, this requirement becomes increasingly complex. Creative outputs emerge through distributed processes in which contributions are multiple, non-linear, and often difficult to disentangle from one another. As such, the notion of origin as a clearly identifiable point of creation becomes less stable. This complexity is reflected in ongoing legal uncertainty across jurisdictions, where questions persist regarding whether ownership should be attributed to developers, users, or other actors involved in AI systems (Guadamuz, 2017; Abbott, 2020). While some legal systems maintain strict requirements of human authorship, others have begun to explore more flexible interpretations, indicating a lack of consensus on how origin should be defined in AI-mediated contexts.

The relationship between input and output in AI systems does not follow a direct or linear model of causation. Programmers, dataset contributors, and users each participate in shaping the conditions of production, yet none can be said to author the output in a conventional legal sense. At the same time, the system itself does not fit within existing categories of legal personhood. Consequently, the assignment of ownership becomes increasingly difficult to resolve within current frameworks. This difficulty arises not simply from a lack of clarity, but from the fact that the conditions required for assigning ownership—namely singular authorship and identifiable origin—are not always present in AI-mediated production.

6.2 The Logic of Derivation

Intellectual property law relies on a distinction between original works and derivative ones, typically grounded in the assumption that originality stems from independent creative acts. AI-generated production complicates this distinction by embedding derivation within the generative process itself. Outputs are produced through the recombination of patterns derived from training data that incorporate extensive prior cultural material. Unlike traditional artistic influence, which involves selective interpretation and transformation, this form of derivation operates through statistical processes that are not easily attributable to conscious intention. As a result, outputs may appear novel while remaining structurally dependent on existing material.

This issue is at the center of ongoing legal disputes concerning generative AI, particularly regarding the use of copyrighted materials in training datasets (Samuelson, 2023; Lemley & Casey, 2021). These debates highlight the difficulty of determining whether such uses constitute permissible transformation or unauthorized reproduction. The absence of clear traceability makes it difficult to establish direct infringement, while the reliance on prior material complicates claims to originality. The distinction between influence and derivation, which underpins intellectual property law, becomes increasingly difficult to apply consistently in this context.

6.3 Opacity, Attribution, and Accountability

The operation of many AI systems introduces an additional challenge in the form of opacity. The processes through which outputs are generated are often not fully transparent or interpretable, even to those involved in their development. This lack of visibility complicates efforts to trace how specific outputs are produced. Such concerns have been recognized in emerging regulatory approaches, particularly within the European Union, where transparency and explainability are emphasized as key requirements for AI systems (European Commission, 2021). However, while such measures address aspects of accountability, they do not fully resolve the challenges posed by distributed and opaque generative processes.

Opacity has significant implications for attribution, which is central to intellectual property law. When the pathways linking inputs to outputs cannot be clearly reconstructed, assigning responsibility becomes more difficult. Rather than being attributable to a single agent, responsibility may be distributed across multiple actors involved in the development, deployment, and use of the system. At the same time, the composition of training datasets—often incorporating large volumes of uncredited material—raises broader concerns regarding fairness, representation, and cultural bias. These issues extend beyond the traditional scope of intellectual property law, further highlighting the gap between legal frameworks and the realities of AI-mediated production.

Taken together, these challenges indicate that the tensions between AI-mediated creativity and intellectual property law are not merely matters of regulatory adjustment, but reflect deeper frictions between established legal assumptions and evolving modes of cultural production. As creative processes become increasingly distributed, processual, and mediated by computational systems, the foundational concepts of authorship, ownership, and originality are placed under sustained pressure. Intellectual property law, while still operative, is thus required to engage with forms of production that do not fully conform to its traditional frameworks. These developments underscore the need to examine more closely how legal and institutional responses might address the changing conditions of creativity in the age of algorithmic culture.

7. Policy Implications and Future Directions

If creativity is understood as distributed and systemically mediated rather than anchored in individual authorship, existing legal and institutional frameworks require reconsideration. The conditions of AI-mediated production challenge conventional assumptions about ownership, accountability, and value, necessitating approaches that are responsive to the relational and processual nature of contemporary cultural production. Policy responses must therefore move beyond models grounded in singular authorship and instead account for the multiple forms of contribution that characterize AI-driven systems. Within this context, several key directions emerge:

1. Rethinking Ownership and Attribution: Conventional models of authorship are increasingly difficult to apply where creative outputs emerge from interactions between developers, users, and datasets. Policy frameworks may need to recognize distributed forms of contribution through more flexible or shared models of attribution.
2. Enhancing Transparency: Greater transparency in AI systems is essential for accountability. Disclosure of generative processes, documentation of training data, and clear labeling of AI-generated content can support traceability and reinforce trust in AI-mediated production.
3. Governing Training Data: The use of large-scale datasets raises questions of consent, compensation, and representation. Clearer standards for data sourcing and licensing, alongside mechanisms to address bias, are necessary to ensure more equitable participation in AI-driven creative ecosystems.
4. Addressing Synthetic Media Risks: Technologies such as deepfakes introduce concerns related to identity, misinformation, and public trust. Effective responses may require a combination of legal protections and technical safeguards to mitigate potential harms while preserving legitimate creative applications.
5. Toward Adaptive Regulation: Given the evolving nature of AI systems, regulatory approaches should remain flexible and context-sensitive. This includes integrating legal, technical, and institutional strategies capable of responding to ongoing developments in AI-mediated cultural production.

While these directions do not offer definitive solutions, they underscore the need for frameworks capable of engaging with creativity as a distributed and evolving process. The challenge is not only to regulate AI technologies, but to rethink the assumptions about authorship, ownership, and value that continue to shape policy in ways increasingly misaligned with contemporary conditions.

8. Conclusion: Creativity Beyond Anthropocentrism

Artificial intelligence does not merely extend creative practice; it exposes the extent to which creativity has never been fully autonomous, but always contingent upon systems, infrastructures, and relations that exceed the individual. The significance of AI lies not in its capacity to imitate creativity, but in its capacity to expose the limitations of anthropocentric models that have historically defined it. What is unsettled, then, is not simply authorship, but the persistence of frameworks that continue to privilege it as the primary locus of creative meaning. In this light, the continued reliance on anthropocentric models of creativity appears less as a theoretical necessity than as an institutional and cultural attachment—one that is increasingly difficult to sustain under conditions of algorithmic production. AI does not so much disrupt creativity as render visible the limitations of the conceptual structures through which it has been historically defined.

This shift carries implications that extend beyond artistic practice to the broader organization of cultural value and knowledge. As creative processes become more distributed, the criteria through which creativity is recognized, legitimized, and governed are also placed under pressure. What is at stake is not only how creativity is produced, but how it is framed, attributed, and regulated within evolving socio-technical systems. The critical task, therefore, is not to determine whether machines can be creative, but to interrogate the assumptions that have long positioned creativity as an exclusively human domain. To do so is to confront the historical, cultural, and institutional conditions that have shaped this understanding—and to reconsider what forms of creativity might emerge when those conditions are no longer taken for granted.

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