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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) AND THE FUTURE OF HUMANITIES





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Artificial intelligence is profoundly reshaping the foundations of human experience across multiple dimensions. This transformation reveals a productive tension between pragmatic instrumentalism and philosophical inquiry that characterizes our evolving understanding of consciousness, identity, and alterity.

From a metaphysical perspective, AI challenges our understanding of reality as intelligent systems generate increasingly convincing simulations. The conventional approach has long treated human consciousness and self-reflexivity as uniquely human qualities. This perspective that has created problematic hierarchies, a version of anthropocentric metaphysics that has not only limited our understanding of non-human intelligence but has also justified ecological destruction. AI development suggests that consciousness might emerge from experimental and pragmatic processes similar to biological evolution, potentially transcending the human/non-human binary that has structured all thinking for centuries and opening possibilities for more inclusive conceptions of sentience. Yet, there is an apprehension that instrumentalization of consciousness risks reducing all experience to functional outputs, this metaphysical flattening can devalue human experience itself, treating consciousness as merely another engineering problem rather than a fundamental dimension of lived existence.

AI reshapes our knowledge paradigms by challenging traditional epistemologies that privilege human rationality alone. Machine learning reframes knowledge as “that which works” rather than absolute truth, creating space for alternative ways of knowing that include neuro divergent perspectives and countering ableist assumptions. This instrumentalist approach democratizes knowledge production, potentially dismantling epistemic hierarchies and fostering solidarity across diverse knowledge communities previously marginalized by conventional rationalist frameworks. However, this epistemological shift can also bring profound challenges as algorithmic knowledge systems increasingly shape our information landscape without transparency or accountability. The opaque computational processes can create more intractable forms of epistemic injustice while reducing our capacity to distinguish reliable information from sophisticated fabrications.

Linguistically, AI has become both a tool for analyzing human communication and a producer of language itself. Traditional philosophy has treated language as uniquely human, a view that has often dismissed non-human communication as mere instinct. Large language models generate coherent text without emotional resonance and self-awareness, suggesting that linguistic capacity exists on a spectrum rather than in binary categories. This recognition could foster greater attentiveness to diverse forms of expression across species and systems, creating possibilities for unprecedented forms of cross-species and human-machine solidarity. Yet, as language becomes increasingly detached from human experience, we face the prospect of communication systems optimized for manipulation rather than mutual understanding.

Ontologically, AI raises profound questions about the categories of being. Conventional ontology has maintained rigid boundaries between the human and non-human, the conscious and unconscious categories that have justified profound social inequalities. The instrumentalist perspective suggests



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functional equivalence might matter more than ontological purity. As Dan Dennett observed: “How is it possible for a physical thing, a person, an animal, a robot, to extract knowledge of the world from perception and then exploit that knowledge in the guidance of successful action?” This ontological flexibility opens possibilities for social change by challenging hierarchies of being that have traditionally justified exploitation based on species, race, gender, caste and ability.

The ethical dimensions reveal similar transformative potential. Conventional ethics has traditionally grounded morality in properties like self-consciousness, criteria that have historically excluded various populations from full moral consideration. AI systems may develop forms of ethical reasoning through entirely different pathways, suggesting that our fixation on specific manifestations of moral agency may be unnecessarily limiting. This ethical pluralism could enable more inclusive moral communities that recognize diverse forms of contribution to social good. Yet, the challenge of morality being reduced algorithmic reductionism can be dangerous. With machine ethics, we risk outsourcing moral judgment to systems that lack the embodied experience of suffering, compassion, and dignity that ground human ethical intuitions. The instrumental approach to ethics threatens to reduce moral questions to technical optimization problems, potentially losing the existential dimension of ethical life.

The social and political impacts extend to practical possibilities for solidarity. Conventional political theories have often assumed particular forms of agency and rationality that exclude many participants from meaningful political participation. AI-mediated social systems may suggest alternative modes of coordination and new forms of technologically mediated collective action that could create unprecedented possibilities for solidarity across previously unbridgeable social divides. Yet, the promise of transcending political divisions through functional approaches masks the antidemocratic implications of governance systems increasingly designed and controlled by technical elites. It is possible that far from creating new solidarities; algorithmic social systems risk fragmenting societies into optimized behaviour modification systems that undermine collective agency and democratic deliberation.

Aesthetically, AI is revolutionizing creative practices. When creative works emerge from human-machine collaboration, traditional notions of artistic consciousness must be reconsidered. Philosophy has treated aesthetic creation as fundamentally tied to human emotional depth, yet AI systems generate works that evoke powerful responses without these qualities. Yet, the mass production of synthetic cultural content risks flooding our aesthetic environment with works that simulate human creativity while systematically extracting value from human artists whose work trained these systems. This aestheticization of the artificial may ultimately impoverish cultural experience by replacing the authentic struggle of human creative expression with frictionless, optimized content production.

This tension between philosophical idealism and instrumentalism ultimately points toward transformative social possibilities. On one hand, moving beyond the conventional insistence that consciousness, knowledge and values we open space for more inclusive conceptions of intelligence and moral consideration. Rather



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than fearing AI as a threat to human uniqueness, we might embrace it as an opportunity to transcend limiting binaries that have structured social hierarchies. It calls for cultivating new forms of solidarity across diverse intelligences; both human and machine that collectively expands our capacity for understanding and care. Yet, fundamental question at the heart of our technological future remains: can we develop forms of intelligence that expand human potential without reducing human experience to merely another “optimization” problem? The future relationship between humanity and AI will likely involve navigating this tension rather than resolving it entirely. The most promising approach lies in developing AI systems that enhance human flourishing by expanding our capacities for understanding, creativity, and care while preserving the distinctiveness of authentic human experience.

We invite and encourage contributions from scholars, academicians and researchers whose work advances critical reflections on the transformative impact of artificial intelligence on human life and its various aspects in diverse areas.

Scope and Themes:

The key areas of publication of this issue include, but are not limited to:

1. AI and Consciousness: New Directions in Philosophy of Mind
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3. The Economics of Artificial Intelligence Labour
4. Political Power and AI Governance Structures
5. Literary Theory in the Era of Synthetic Texts
6. Ethical Frameworks for Artificial Intelligence Development
7. Anthropological Studies of AI in Indian/Global Contexts
8. Philosophy of Language and Machine Understanding
9. Social Justice Dimensions of AI Implementation
10. Memory Studies and Digital Preservation in the AI Era
11. Religious Studies Perspectives on Non-Human Intelligence
12. Gender Theory and the Construction of AI Identities
13. Postcolonial Approaches to Global AI Development
14. Moral Philosophy and Machine Ethics Dilemmas/ Access to Information and Misinformation
15. The Geography of AI: Spatial Dimensions of Technology
16. Disability Studies and Accessibility in AI Design
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