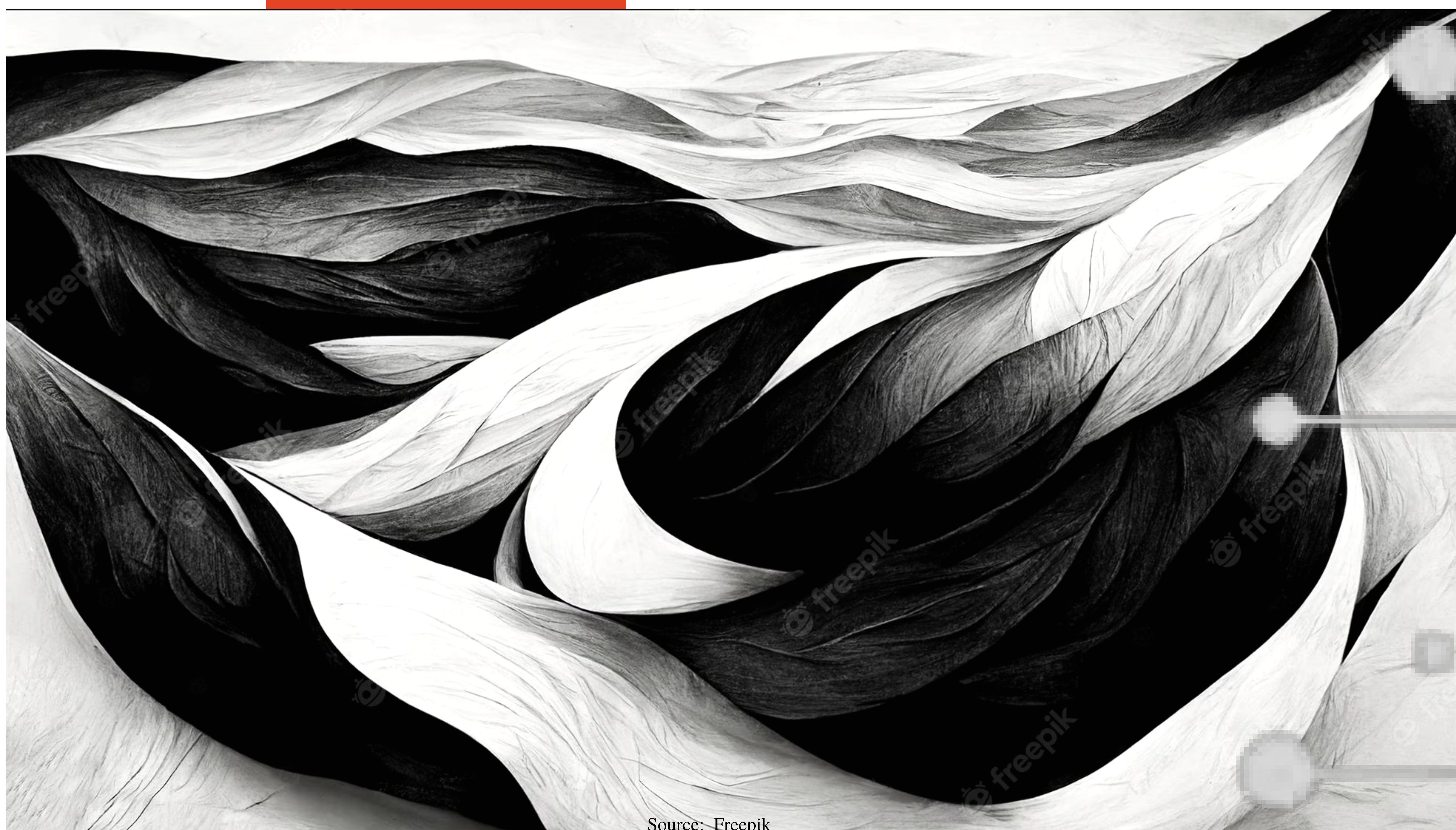


Technology, Art and Society

CALL FOR PAPERS
SEPTEMBER 2023



University of Mumbai



Source: Freepik

Technology and art defines the world we live in. Philosophical reflections on both art and technology have continued to shape and reshape imaginations of what one knows as the self, the other and the world. New innovations and experiments in art and technology have constantly changed rules of language and engagement with the world making this traditional distinction redundant. The traditional debates of art and technology emphasized the autonomy of technology as a determinate force that develops independent of human choices. Thinkers like Jacques Ellul and Martin Heidegger discuss technology as an independent force that determines society and societal change. They discuss technology as a certain way in which one relates to the world, through certain values primarily efficiency and productivity. The idea of technology as an ideology is an important theme of the Frankfurt school of philosophy. While being critical of associations of technological growth with societal progress; the Frankfurt school thinkers explained a close relationship of technology with capitalism (but not reducible to capitalism). Influenced by ideas of Karl Marx and Max Weber's views on technology, thinkers like Lukács, Marcuse, Habermas identified technology as having its own dynamic. Lukács in his work *History and Class Consciousness*, explains technology beyond the Marx's understanding of technology as machinery to something that complements labour, yet, remains substantially distinct from it. This a-synchronicity between humans and modern technology is recognised as modernity's political ideology by Marcuse and Habermas. Marcuse in his work *One Dimensional Man*, explains technology as a means of social control and an ideology. Technological rationality manifested in industrial capitalism is based on convenience, efficiency, standardization, atomization and loss of personal autonomy. This leads to loss of critical thinking, promotes authoritarianism and war economies. Thus, it is an ideology, in the sense that it is pervasive and makes it impossible to conceive of an alternative society or way of thinking. Habermas in his essay on science and technology too explains technology as an ideology that invades the social world in a way that it perceives all societal problems as technological problems systematically distorting all communicative rationality and prospects of emancipation.

Walter Benjamin, in contrast to the conservative critique of technology, states its positive aspects. This is in the form of his argument in *Art in Age of Mechanical Reproduction* where he argues that one could see the possibility in technology of making conceivable new cultural realities. New kinds of aesthetic experience is made possible with emerging technologies. It's mode of mechanical reproduction frees art from the burden of "aura" as well as the burden of "authenticity" as modern culture is no longer tied to traditional values of aesthetics and traditions.

This brings us to reimagine the ontology of art itself. Aesthetics, derived from Greek word *aisthetikos* meaning sense perception is an inquiry into nature and appreciation of art, beauty and taste. Typically engaging with questions such as "What is a work of art?", "What makes a work of art successful?", "Why do we find certain things beautiful?", "How can things of very different categories be considered equally beautiful?", "Is there a connection between art and morality?", "Can art be a vehicle of truth?", "Are aesthetic judgements objective statements or purely subjective expressions of personal attitudes?", "Can aesthetic judgements be improved or trained?", there is a long philosophical tradition of understanding the nature of art, what makes art valuable as well as to understand its social importance. Philosophically art is explained as mimesis/ representation of the world (Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle), art as a matter of imagination, emotion, taste (Collingwood, David Hume and Immanuel Kant), art as having a cognitive value and a materialistic, historical and socio-philosophical context (Hegel, Marx), art as having a concrete, existential orientation (Nietzsche, Heidegger), art and its close relationship with language and ethics (for thinkers like Benedetto Croce, Wittgenstein), art as medium of self expression, interpretation and truth (for thinkers like Martin Heidegger), art as a form of social monad (Theodor Adorno) and art as an educative experience (John Dewey); to name a few traditions. However, the subject matter in the mainstream American European philosophies largely remained limited to aesthetic inquiry with focus on beauty, truth and its claims on the world. Late twentieth-century Anglo-American aesthetics challenged the mainstream philosophies of art and its theoretical assumptions. Mainstream theories excluded the entirety of people's multi-faceted aesthetic life, events of everyday life, artifacts, daily domestic objects and experiences, interactions with other people, reflections on mundane activities such as eating, walking, and cleaning. Further, the theories did not pay adequate attention to issues such as indeterminate identity of the object of aesthetic experience, relevance of art that lacks sanction from institutionally agreed norms, issues of anonymity or absence of the author/designer/creator, changes and modifications that everyday objects go through, bodily engagements with objects and activities. A powerful intervention here has been the feminist reflections on art theories and practices. It critiqued the seemingly neutral and inclusive language of knowledge systems as being inherently gender biased. Feminist perspectives in aesthetics reflected on issues of cultural influences that perpetuate notions of subjectivity, social formation of gender, sexuality and identity. It also examines how these notions are framed by factors such as race, caste, national origin, religion, class, social position and historical situation. They reflect on norms governing gender appearance in art and extend considerations for exclusion of the disabled body too.

Yet, art and aesthetic experience in India has an interesting legacy in the context of colonisation and India's struggle for independence. Pre colonisation artistic practices in India largely remained that which was practised by experts who were paid by the elite, hence art in its most forms was used to glorify a king's/ruler's dominance and re-creating desired story for a ruler (like it was in most parts of the world). The British rule in India modified architectural practices to Indian architecture in order to signify the change of political power in India. The swadeshi movement provided an important catalyst in revival of interest in the ancient and medieval art. Artists developed a unique idiom of modern art that reflected a spirituality of its tradition contrasted to the materialism of the west. Scholars like Ananda Coomaraswamy, Sister Nivedita, E.B. Havell studied the ancient and medieval traditions and artworks and inspired the artists of the time who sort to establish an anti colonial voice against the oppressive British regime. Works of artists Abanindranath Tagore, Raja Ravi Varma, Nandalal Bose, the Kalighat style of paintings, Abdur Rahman Chughtai, Zainul Abedin (to name a few) were created

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using alternate mediums such as watercolours, inks, and the Japanese calligraphy and wash-paintings were used instead of mediums such as oil which was perceived as Western. Inspired by classical stories from religion, folklore and local arts and crafts the artists inspired a version of nationalist imagination that played a pivotal role in breaking British cultural supremacy, rebuilding self-identity and inspiring pride in indigenous practices amidst the masses. Technology and promise of modern life was viewed with suspicion as it stood for a certain materialism that leads to enslavement of human life and freedom.

Yet, in the mid twentieth century it was cinema that played a vital role in shaping world and Indian politics. The event of cinema breaks the dichotomy of art and technology and forces us to re imagine what is imagined as real, virtual, scientific, logical and imaginative. It made possible newer forms of expression that transformed the boundaries of perceiving materials, people, culture, histories, religion, and other frontiers of knowledge and the world. The very notion of human subjectivity changes as technology becomes an “extended mind”, a mind that is a part of the world (cinema) and “brain as a screen” as explained by Giles Deleuze in his work on Cinema 1 and 2. Colour theory, photography and invention of computers transformed activities such as painting, drawing, sculpture, music, literature giving rise to a new understanding and praxis of creative production. Contemporary artists base their practice on presentation of immaterial and ephemeral material, reshaping art spaces and public interaction with art objects and its aesthetic experience. Severing ties with established boundaries of aesthetics, mixing art and technology through digital art, kinetic pieces, internet, post internet art, computer production, video art, computer-based installations (to name few) offers opportunity to artists to explore untouched grounds that reshapes the world in radical ways. The lines between the virtual and real are blurred as innovative development offer new opportunities for different authors to merge different skills, tools and offer to us a different perspective of the present we all share. Silka P and Andrey in their journalistic article “The Serious Relationship of Art and Technology: New Media” for Widewalls (July 2017), discusses works of some prominent New Media artists. Practitioner Kim Keever manipulated chemistry and captured colourful chemical reactions by drizzling paint into 200 gallon fish tank, Eric Standley’s lazer made paper-cut artworks carve minute details and miniatures, Japanese designer Yuri Suzzuki, computer based art techniques of Charles Csuri (considered the father of computer art and computer graphics), Kyle McDonald (an artist/hacker), Sara Ludy (she makes magic tricks with pixels) and James George (explores ways of seeing the world through technology), Micheal Manning (imitates the physical appearance of an acrylic brush through computer programs), Rafael Lozano-Hemmer’s installation of laser pieces and Ben Tricklebank’s unusual interactive movies through which viewers are responsible for the course that films take. In the field of performing arts too new artistic vocabularies is established as performers, rely on technology to make their shows, Fluxus and Gutai being prominent practioners in 1960’s avant-garde movements. This is list of few prominent practitioners and accessibility of their art forms is made possible with the technology of internet and more formal education institutions that continue to be set up for advancing learning in the field of technology based art forms in different parts of the world. The Arts and Technology (ATEC) program at the University of Texas at Dallas, Parsons School of Design in New York, Centre for Arts and Technology in British Columbia are examples of the same. In India, the story of new media art is only a couple of decades old. Johan Pijnappel, a Dutch art historian specialising in new media art in Asia examines globalisation and religious hyper-nationalism to the Indian artist’s need to explore new horizons. In the 1990s, Indian new media artists worked between media, at interfaces between shadow installations and video (Nalini Malani), video and sculpture (Vivan Sundaram and Sheba Chhachhi), video animation (Navjot and Manjunath Kamath), the internet and painting (Baiju Parthan), painting and video (Ranbir Kaleka), and in performance-based video art and installations (Subodh Gupta, Shilpa Gupta, Kiran Subbaiah and Tejal Shah). Moreover, in the 1990s, the artist groups like Raqs media collective, Thukral and Tagra and Desire Machine extended these new media art practices to digital and virtual explorations (Mrinal Kulkarni, Posthuman Body and Visuality: Local and Virtual Interface in New Media Art, December 27, 2022).

To summarise, the new media art has redefined our understating of the world, art and technology in innovative and unexpected ways. Traditional art and technology philosophies predominantly privileged the autonomous human pure subjectivity and hence all discussions of relationship of art with technology eventually became linked to mind, matter, emotions, intellect, representation, visibility, identity and the gaze debate. The proliferation of digital media has transformed the relationship between the subject, object’s materiality and its representation. The new media art introduces new forms of interactivity, non-linearity, and immateriality that challenges the subject- object centred understanding of art and explores the agency of the different material objects, mediums of expressions themselves. This going beyond the “visual”, “representation” and “beauty” discourses in art and technology is as Griselda Pollock mentions a shift from reproducibility to producibility. This materiality alters the role and position of the human body as it functions both as a source of production as well as a site that resists its demystification. The cultural imageries it creates brings up questions of how digital subjectivity and computational mediation can relay with human intentions, manipulations, strategies, frame and re frame embodied memories and realities (and vice versa). The imitations of the natural body by the “artificial” (and vice versa) simultaneously question it’s ontology. This on one hand makes room for the fragile and fragmented body important for building an inclusive society, yet on the other hand, the post human subject in digital and virtual media redefines the shared life world that we inhabit. This discussion aims to extend the boundaries of aesthetics, science, technology, philosophy in order to address variety of questions including politics, ethics, justice, inclusive social systems, language and the intellectual aspiration of inter disciplinarity towards a better world.

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Deliberations in form of papers are invited on the mentioned issues and extended to topics surrounding following themes-

- a.Art and Technology: Philosophies, Histories and Theories
- b.Pedagogies of Art in digital world
- c.Technology and Art: interfaces, mediation, and usability
- d.Art, Justice and Rights in Digital Age
- e.New Media, Technology and the Arts
- f.Arts and Technology in Social, Political and Community Life
- g.Arts, Technology and Social Realities
- h.Ethics, Human Values through Art and Technology
- i.Globalisation and Digital Meanings: multi modal communications and multi literacies
- j.Ecological Sustainability, Arts and Technology
- k.Authorship, Ownership, Privacy and Security in
- l.Art, Technology and sustainable Heritage Development
- m.Art and Technology and Framing Consensus in the Society
- n.Art, Technology: Elitism and Accessibility
- o.Interactive Arts and Technology in globalised world
- p.Technology and Economics of Art
- q.Impact of technology on Tradition, Arts and Crafts
- r.Arts, Technology and Psychoanalysis
- s.Art, Technology and transformation of spaces and cultures
- t.Arts, Technology and Social Movements
- u.Technology in (and of) Popular Art

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The September 2023 issue of Sambhashan will be on the above themes. Last date for the submission of article is October 31, 2023. The style of Writing the article is given on the website: <https://mu.ac.in/sambhashan> Kindly follow the instructions given on the website. Submit your article through a word file on the following email id: coeditor.sambhashan@mu.ac.in

Guidelines to follow for writing a research paper in Sambhashan:

- Original, scholarly, creative and critical papers with adequate references and empirical work (if applicable).
- All references to the author should be removed from the submission to enable the anonymous review process.
- There should be a limit from 4000-6000 words (for papers), 1500-2000 words (for commentaries) and 1000 words (for book reviews).
- Essays should follow the Times New Roman font in size 12 with double space and be submitted as a word document.
- All contributions should follow the author-date referencing system detailed in chapter 15 of The Chicago Manual of Style (17th Edition). The style guidelines are given below and can also be consulted on the journal webpages for quick reference.
- Authors should submit a statement that their contribution is original without any plagiarism. They can also, in addition, submit a plagiarism check certificate.

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A) BOOKS

- Book references should be listed at the end of the paper as “Works Cited” in alphabetical order.

Single Author:

Carson, Rachel. 2002. *Silent Spring*. New York: HMH Books.

Dual Authors:

Adorno, Theodor, and Max Horkheimer. 1997. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. London: Verso.

Multiple Authors:

Berkman, Alexander, Henry Bauer, and Carl Nold. 2011. *Prison Blossoms: Anarchist Voices from the American Past*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

B) JOURNAL ARTICLE

- List should follow alphabetical order and mention the page range of the published article.

- The URL or name of the database should be included for online articles referenced.

Anheier, Helmut K., Jurgen Gerhards, and Frank P. Romo. 1995. “Forms of Capital and Social Structure in Cultural Fields: Examining Bourdieu's Social Topography.” *American Journal of Sociology* 100, no. 4 (January): 859–903.

Ayers, Lewis. 2000. “John Caputo and the ‘Faith’ of Soft-Postmodernism.” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (March): 13–31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002114000006500102>

Dawson, Doyne. 2002. “The Marriage of Marx and Darwin?” *History and Theory* 41, no. 1 (February): 43–59.

C) NEWS OR MAGAZINE ARTICLE

- List should follow alphabetical order and need not mention the page numbers or range.
- The URL or name of the database should be included for online articles referenced.

Hitchens, Christopher. 1996. "Steal This Article." Vanity Fair, May 13, 1996
<https://www.vanityfair.com/culture/1996/05/christopher-hitchens-plagiarism-musings>

Khan, Saeed. 2020. "1918 Spanish Flu cure ordered by doctors was contraindicated in Gandhiji's Principles". Times of India, April 14, 2020.

[http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/75130706.cms?
utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/75130706.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

Klein, Ezra. 2020. "Elizabeth Warren has a plan for this too." Vox, April 6, 2020.
<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2020/4/6/21207338/elizabeth-warrencoronavirus-covid-19-recession-depression-presidency-trump>.

D) WEBSITE CONTENT

- Website content can be restricted to in-text citation as follows: "As of May 1, 2017, Yale's home page listed . . .". But it can also be listed in the reference list alphabetically as follows. The date of access can be mentioned if the date of publication is not available.

Anthony Appiah, Kwame. 2014. "Is Religion Good or Bad?" Filmed May 2014 at TEDSalon, New York.
https://www.ted.com/talks/kwame_anthony_appiah_is_religion_good_or_bad_this_is_a_trick_question

Yale University. n.d. "About Yale: Yale Facts." Accessed May 1, 2017.
<https://www.yale.edu/about-yale/yale-facts>.