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‘Exploring AI-Powered Creativity in the Digital Age: A review of *‘The Artist in the Machine’.*

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**Abstract**

‘Creativity is the production of new knowledge from already existing knowledge and is accomplished by problem solving’[[1]](#footnote-1). Is this how you would define creativity? *The Artist in the Machine* is a deeply fascinating and thought-provoking book that explores the possibility and power of artificial intelligence in regard to how it can nourish and spark creativity, whether that is music, art, or literature. Whilst doing this, he also addresses the conversation of AI’s creative ability that someday may surpass humans. Can computers be more creative than humans? How far can we define creativity? How do these things fit in regard to authority and ownership? These are the gripping questions that Miller addresses and examines in his book.

Miller begins his book by broadly speaking on the subject of creativity. He states that all new knowledge must come from old knowledge, and this is what sparks creativity, a subject. All writers will need a subject. For example, poets and writers like Shakespeare and Wordsworth built their work around societal issues, inspired by work that had built up over centuries. However, what sets them apart and what makes them creative, are ‘constraints and problems.’[[2]](#footnote-2)Such as, Shakespeare breaking out of the sonnet form, or using rhymes. Therefore, if all creativity is from previous knowledge, AI is more than capable of building onto that and pushing the boundaries of what is possible in artistic and creative expression.

Miller continues by giving credit to Einstein, Bach, and Picasso; some of the most influential and creative people of our time. He shows his examinations for their hallmarks of creativity, and states that introspecting, experience, and suffering, to know your own strengths and many more qualities are needed for creativity. He discusses these in detail, and his knowledge of each hallmark of creativity is intriguing. He also discusses the early experiments in computer art in the 1960s and 70s, to show us how long AI has had an influence in creative work.

Regarding AI, Miller expands his research and discusses key, modern-day debates about whether AI could have a consciousness, whether it has feelings and so on. He explores the link between consciousness and creativity and says, ‘But surely consciousness – the sense of ourselves and of the world around us, which we experience every moment of the waking day – it is so overwhelming that it has to be at the root of how we think and create’[[3]](#footnote-3). Therefore, Miller is implying that for the thought process of creative work to happen, consciousness is needed. This swiftly brings Miller on to discuss the debates of the possibility of consciousness in AI, and whether AI has the capacity to think, or feel. His research is backed up by many studies from computer scientists or philosophers, which makes it a greatly interesting, but informative read too.

We know that in today’s world, AI is more advanced than ever before, and it will only continue growing in ability. However, could AI really overtake humans in creative work? We know that at this stage, there is no possibility of consciousness in AI. However, Miller points out that in computer-generated literature, we do get a glimpse of emotion or personality. For example, ‘the complex human facility of humour. Even at the most basic level, like knock-knock jokes, machines don’t know they are making a joke’[[4]](#footnote-4), this is because they don’t have an awareness, however this is still unexpected and hints at a personality. But how do we recognise creativity? How do we set it apart from old knowledge or replicated data. The answer is that ‘We can only program our computers according to how we think and how our own creativity work’. Therefore, if there ever is a time when machines reach our level of creativity, they will create one of their own – one that we cannot simply imagine yet. Miller goes deep into this topic of comparing creativity in humans and machines, however he does a great job at simplifying his studies, by reminding us of where AI is at, in this present day.

Overall, *Miller’s The Artist in the Machine* is a fascinating and gripping book that delves into the possibility of AI-Powered creativity, and how this would affect our modern world. It also touches on what makes creativity and allows us to think outside the box regarding how creative work is decided and put together.

1. Arthur I. Miller, 2020. *The Artist in the Machine the Artist in the Machine* (London, England: MIT Press) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Miller, p.289. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Miller, p.264. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Miller, p.299. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)