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Comparing the Artistic Value of AI-Generated Art and Human-Created Art on Reddit
(1223words)

1. Introduction:

In recent years, the debate around artificial intelligence (AI) and its role in creative fields has grown rapidly. The emergence of AI-generated art, particularly through tools like DALL·E and MidJourney, has made it easier to produce artwork, sparking questions about how AI compares to traditional, human-created art. While some argue that human creativity, emotional expression, and lived experience are central to artistic production—qualities that AI lacks—others believe AI-generated art has the potential to push creative boundaries and democratize access to art-making tools.

Research such as that by Złotowski et al. (2023) shows that people often prefer human-created art for its emotional depth and authenticity. Epstein et al. (2023) point out that bias against AI-generated art can actually make human creativity seem even more impressive. Despite these findings, there is limited research on how dedicated online art communities, particularly on Reddit, perceive the artistic value of AI-generated art compared to human-made art. This study aims to fill that gap by exploring the attitudes of Reddit users across various creative fields.

2. Research Question:

How do Reddit users perceive the artistic value of AI-generated art compared to human-created art?

3. Method:

3.1 Data

For this study, I manually gathered Reddit comments from four subreddits where discussions around AI-generated and human-created art are prevalent: r/ArtistLounge, r/DigitalPainting, r/aiwars, and r/aiArt. The dataset includes comments from various posts, such as *"How do you perceive AI-generated art?"*, *"We're better than AI at art"*, and *"AI art and human creativity"* from r/ArtistLounge; *"AI art your honest opinion?"*

from r/DigitalPainting; *"AI Art vs Traditional Art. Personal Thoughts"* from r/aiwars; and *"Do you consider AI art art?"* from r/aiArt. These subreddits were selected because they offer a combination of communities that focus on both traditional and digital art, as well as on AI art, providing a broad range of perspectives. To ensure the relevance of the discussions, comments were drawn from posts created within the past two years, reflecting the ongoing evolution of conversations around AI art. A total of 50 top-level comments were randomly chosen, excluding any comments that had been deleted or removed, with both high- and low-engagement posts considered to capture a variety of viewpoints.

3.2 Analysis

The Reddit comments collected were analyzed using a qualitative content analysis method. A codebook was created after examining the dataset to identify recurring themes and patterns. Each comment was sorted into one of five categories and further analyzed for sentiment (positive, negative, or neutral). Sentiments were also broken down into subcategories to better capture the emotional tone.

Table 1: Codebook of Comment Categories with Descriptions and Examples

Category	Description	Example
Authenticity	Comments discussing the originality or genuineness of AI-generated or human-created art.	"AI-generated pieces don't feel authentic; it seems like they just replicate existing work."
Creativity	Comments addressing the creative process, innovation, or skill in producing AI or human-made art.	"Creating art requires imagination and intuition, which I don't believe AI can truly replicate."
Aesthetic value	Comments evaluating the visual or sensory quality of the art.	"Some AI art can be visually stunning, but it doesn't have the personal touch of hand-crafted art."
Emotional Impact	Comments focused on the emotional connection or response to the artwork.	"AI-generated art is nice to look at, but it lacks the emotional depth that comes

		from human experiences."
Threat of Replacement	Comments expressing concern about AI art potentially replacing human artists.	"I worry that as AI becomes more advanced, fewer opportunities will exist for traditional artists."

Following this categorization, a sentiment analysis was conducted. Each comment was labeled as positive, negative, or neutral, and then further divided into subcategories to capture more specific emotional tones.

Positive comments were divided into:

1. **Supportive:** Comments expressing support for AI's role in the art world or its potential to contribute to creativity.
2. **Appreciative**: Comments that express admiration for the aesthetics or usefulness of AI-generated art.
3. **Enthusiastic:** Comments displaying enthusiasm about AI's future possibilities in artistic innovation.

Negative comments were categorized into:

1. **Dismissive:** Comments that reject or devalue AI art, often pointing out its limitations or lack of creativity.
2. **Apprehensive:** Comments expressing worry, fear, or frustration about AI's impact on traditional artists and creative jobs.
3. **Ethically Outraged:** Comments raising ethical concerns about AI art, including potential plagiarism or lack of originality.

Neutral: Comments acknowledging both pros and cons, offering a more balanced or moderate perspective.

This comprehensive categorization, along with sentiment analysis, provided valuable insights into how Reddit users perceive the artistic value of AI-generated art in comparison to human-created art.

4. Results:

The analysis of Reddit comments showed that Authenticity was the most discussed category, representing 38% of the total comments, with 73.68% of the comments expressing negative sentiment due to concerns over originality and ethics of AI-generated

art. Creativity, which accounted for 32% of comments, had the highest proportion of positive sentiment (56.25%), with users praising AI's role in innovation, while 31.25% were critical. Aesthetic Value comprised 12% of the comments, evenly split between positive and neutral sentiments. Emotional Impact made up 8% of the total comments and was the most negatively received category, with all users critiquing AI's inability to evoke emotions. Finally, Threat of Replacement represented 10% of the discussion, with 60% of comments expressing concerns about AI's potential to replace human artists, and 40% viewing AI as a complementary tool.

Table 2: Sentiment Distribution Across Categories

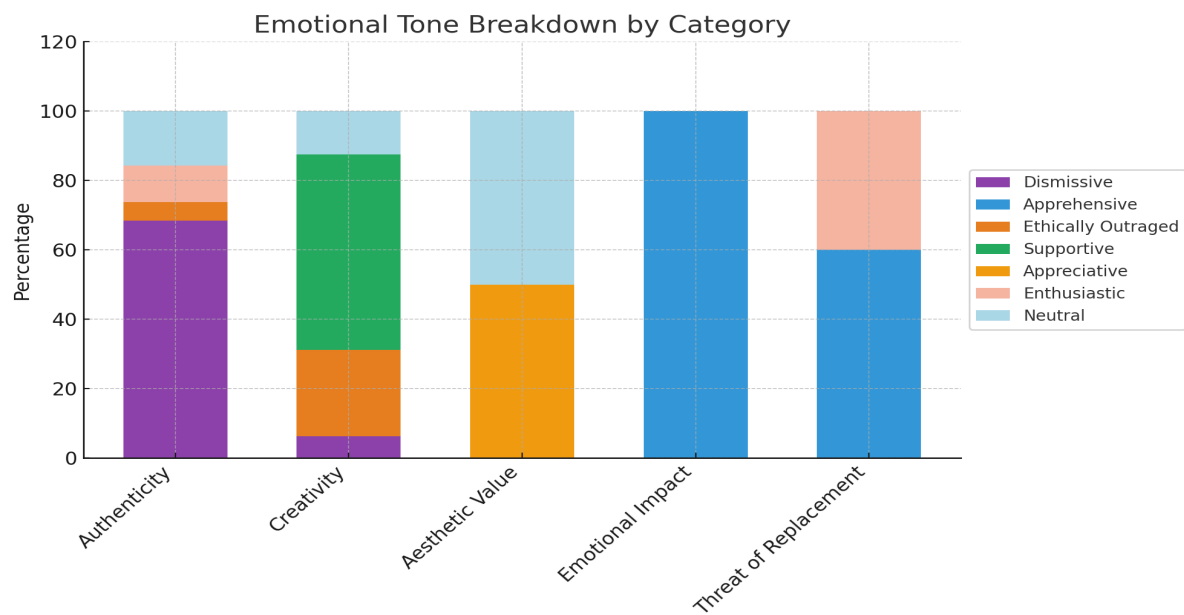| Category	Total comments	Percentage	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Authenticity	19	38%	10.53%	73.68%	15.79%
Creativity	16	32%	56.25%	31.25%	12.5%
Aesthetic Value	6	12%	50%	0	50%
Emotional Impact	4	8%	0	100%	0
Threat of Replacement	5	10%	40%	60%	0

In addition to the sentiment analysis, the emotional tone of the comments was explored across categories. Authenticity was predominantly viewed with a dismissive tone (68.42%), reflecting skepticism toward AI's legitimacy and originality. A smaller portion (10.53%) of comments expressed enthusiasm for AI's potential, while 15.79% of users took a neutral stance, acknowledging both the benefits and drawbacks of AI-generated art. The Creativity category received the highest proportion of supportive comments (56.25%), with users praising AI for its role in promoting innovation and expanding creative possibilities. However, 25% of users expressed ethical outrage, raising concerns about plagiarism or the lack of originality in AI art, while 12.5% remained neutral, acknowledging both sides of the debate. Aesthetic Value was divided evenly, with 50% of comments appreciative of the visual appeal of AI-generated art, while the remaining 50% were neutral, indicating a more balanced view that acknowledged both positive and negative aspects of AI's aesthetics. In the Emotional Impact category, 100% of the comments expressed apprehension, questioning whether AI art could truly evoke

emotional depth in the same way human-created art does. Lastly, the Threat of Replacement category revealed mixed emotions: 60% of the comments were apprehensive, expressing concern over AI's potential to replace human artists, while 40% of users were enthusiastic about the possibilities AI presents as a complementary tool for human creativity. Neutral tones across the categories reflected a balanced acknowledgment of AI's potential and limitations, with users recognizing both the advantages and challenges AI brings to the art world.

Table 3: Emotional Tone Breakdown by Category

Category	Dismissive	Apprehensive	Ethically Outraged	Supportive	Appreciative	Enthusiastic
Authenticity	68.42%	0	5.26%	0	0	10.53%
Creativity	6.25%	0	25%	56.25%	0	0
Aesthetic value	0	0	0	0	50%	0
Emotional Impact	0	100%	0	0	0	0
Threat of Replacement	0	60%	0	0	0	40%

Figure 1: Emotional Tone Comparison Across Categories of Artistic value

5. Conclusion and Limitations

The results from this study revealed that Reddit users generally view AI-generated art with skepticism, particularly in terms of Authenticity and Emotional Impact. Many users raised concerns about the originality and ethical issues surrounding AI art, with some arguing that it fails to evoke meaningful emotions, strengthening the belief that human-created art remains superior in these aspects. However, there was also recognition of AI's innovative potential in the Creativity category, where most comments were positive. Users appreciated AI's ability to push artistic boundaries, highlighting its role in fostering new forms of creativity. Opinions were mixed when it came to AI's impact on traditional artists—some viewed AI as a useful tool that could complement human creativity, while others expressed fear that it could replace human artists in creative roles.

There are some limitations to this study. First, the dataset was drawn from a limited selection of Reddit posts from specific subreddits, which may not fully represent the views of the broader online art community. Additionally, the analysis was based on a small sample of 50 comments, potentially limiting the relevance of the results. Future research could address these limitations by including larger datasets and examining discussions on other social media platforms or across more diverse online communities to gain a more complete understanding of public attitudes toward AI-generated art.

6. References:

Złotowski, J., Bellaiche, L., Shahi, R., Turpin, M. H., Haring, K. S., & Bartneck, C. (2023). Humans versus AI: Whether and why we prefer human-created compared to AI-created artwork. *Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications, 8*(1), 42. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41235-023-00499-6

Epstein, Z., Levine, S., Rand, D. G., & Rahwan, I. (2023). Bias against AI art can enhance perceptions of human creativity. *Scientific Reports, 13*(1), 18365. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-45202-3