

Generative Logic and Construction of New Film Philosophy in the Context of AIGC

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Abstract: Against the theoretical backdrop of Walter Benjamin's concept of "aura" and André Bazin's Ontology of the Photographic Image, traditional film philosophy is fundamentally grounded in anthropocentrism and the "representation" of physical reality. However, the unique generative capacity, algorithmic logic and immateriality inherent to AIGC technology have completely subverted this foundational framework. This paper conducts a systematic and comprehensive review of the corresponding paradigm shifts, and discusses the emergence path and legitimacy construction of the new film philosophy. It starts from the core tenets of traditional film philosophy, then analyzes the film form revolution triggered by AIGC, pointing out that the production subject has shifted from pure human agents to "human-machine coupling", and the production process has transformed from a "heavy industry" model to a "lightweight" virtualized paradigm. On this basis, the core tenets of the new film philosophy are clarified: film has evolved from "recording reality" to "algorithmically generating worlds", and the audience is no longer a mere observer, but a "cyborg subject" or co-creator coexisting with algorithms. Finally, this paper brings to the forefront the dilemmas faced by cinema in algorithmic society, including homogenization and emotional vacancy, and explores feasible paths for the harmonious reconciliation of art and technology.

Keywords: Aura; Algorithm; AIGC; Film Philosophy; Human-Machine Coupling

1. Introduction

The formation of traditional film philosophy is, to a large extent, a response to technological transformations. The theories of Walter Benjamin and André Bazin respectively represent the core reflections on the ontology and value of moving

images in the pre-cinema era and the golden age of cinema.

1.1 Benjamin's "Aura" and Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction

The concept of "Aura" proposed by Walter Benjamin in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* serves as the fundamental anchor for analyzing the value of traditional art. Aura refers to "the unique manifestation of a thing that, no matter how close it may be, remains at a distance", whose emergence is directly tied to the "here-and-now presence" and "authenticity" of artworks, and constitutes an integral part of ritual, cult value and handmade craftsmanship [1]. However, mechanical reproduction methods such as photography and cinema enable mass duplication of artworks, which initiates the decay of aura. As Benjamin argues, film actors confront machines rather than human counterparts, and their performances are no longer living, embodied actions, making it impossible to preserve the aura attached to the actor and the portrayed character [2]. Cinema enters the market in a segmentable and exploitable form, where the exhibition value of art replaces its cult value. This shift further transforms the mode of artistic reception from a state of contemplative absorption to the form of "shock", laying the philosophical foundation for positioning cinema as a modern mass culture.

1.2 Bazin's "Ontology of the Photographic Image" and Cinema's Pursuit of Documentary Truth

If Benjamin has articulated the loss brought about by mechanical reproduction, André Bazin then sets out to construct new aesthetic legitimacy for cinema. His *"Ontology of the Photographic Image"* centers on the fundamental "identity" between the photographic image and the photographed object in the real world. Driven by the objectivity of the camera lens, human subjective bias is eliminated in the photographic

process, which "restores the world to its original innocence" [3]. The "automatic generation" derived from this mechanism precisely constitutes Bazin's "reconstruction of material reality", whose aesthetic pursuit is defined as "the myth of total reality". Bazin argues that long takes, deep-focus shots and sequence shots deserve full affirmation, as they can preserve the integrity, ambiguity and multi-layered nature of reality, rather than treating montage as a forcible fragmentation of meaning. His thinking represents an extension of phenomenological reasoning, which philosophically demonstrates the possibility of cinematic documentary, and establishes reverence for cinema as a carrier of "reality".

1.3 AIGC and the Fundamental Characteristics of Generative Imagery

As an emerging phenomenon, image production enabled by AIGC (Artificial Intelligence Generated Content) fundamentally differs from both Benjamin's "mechanical reproduction" and Bazin's "mechanical recording". It presents three

core features:

Generativity replacing reproducibility: AIGC models (such as diffusion models) generate images by leveraging probabilistic information embedded in massive existing datasets, rather than directly reproducing or recording pre-existing visual objects in the physical world [4].

Algorithm-driven logic instead of human-centric creation: The production process no longer relies on the intuitive sensibility or aesthetic training of individual directors. Instead, algorithms, data and computing power form a dominant "algorithmic logic", and the identity of the creator shifts from a traditional "auteur" to a "prompt engineer" or "algorithm tamer" [5].

Immateriality and "de-indexicality" of images themselves: AIGC images do not possess the physical "indexicality" obtained through the photochemical principles of traditional photography. They are only numerically defined symbols and endlessly editable "bits", which thoroughly subverts Bazin's ontological proposition that "the image equals reality" [5].

See Figure 1.

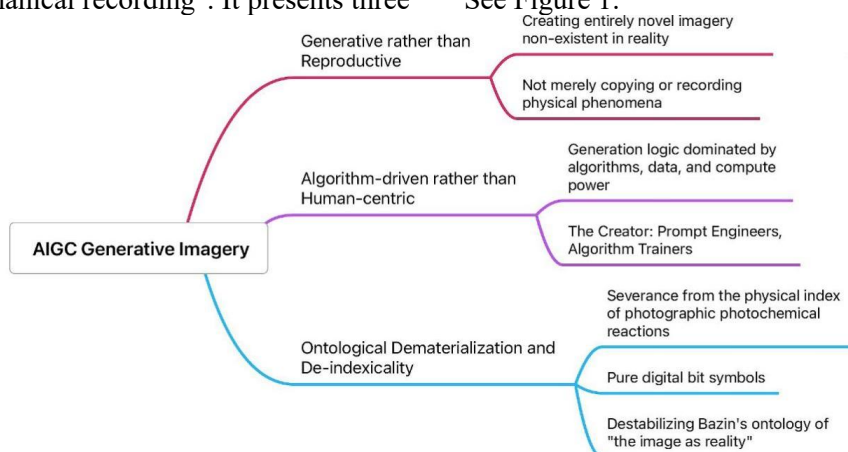


Figure 1. Three Core Attributes of AIGC-Generated Generative Imagery

2. The Subversive Reconstruction of Cinematic Form by AIGC Algorithms

Building on these core characteristics of AIGC, the technology is carrying out a subversive reconstruction of the film industry from two central dimensions: the creation subject and the production workflow.

2.1 Production Subject: From Anthropocentrism to Algorithm-Centrism

The fundamental logic of traditional cinematic creation revolves around the concept of the "auteur". Even for "institutional auteurs" embedded within industrial systems, their creative subjectivity has never been questioned.

However, in the AIGC era, a radical "decentralization" of the creation subject is taking place. On one hand, the "human-machine coupling" creation paradigm has fully emerged. Under the "human-AI double helix model", humans and AI do not follow a simple dynamic of domination and subordination; instead, they form a hybrid intelligent agent through entangled, collaborative interactions [6]. On the other hand, when AI can independently choreograph narratives, control camera movements, and construct characters through algorithmic operations, it transcends the status of a mere tool and becomes a "quasi-subject", namely an "algorithmic auteur". This raises profound doubts over the very definition of "authorship": for a

fully AIGC-generated film, who should hold the copyright? The human who inputs the prompts, the engineers who designed the program, or the AI itself [4]? Scholar Chen Xuguang has summarized this scenario as a "cyborg subject" defined by "human-machine integration": the director's physical body and creative vision gain new forms of extension through AI, yet they risk losing the unique perceptual sensibility of human creation due to the instrumental rationality of algorithms. As illustrated in Figure 2.

2.2 Production Workflow: From Heavy-Industry Live-Action Filmmaking to AI-Driven Lightweight Virtual Production

The transformation brought by AIGC is fundamental to film production itself, as it converts the old "heavy industry" model — characterized by massive labor input, substantial material resources and extremely high costs — into an intelligent, virtualized "lightweight" production paradigm [7].

Lightweighting of production materials: The traditional "heavy industry" film model is a

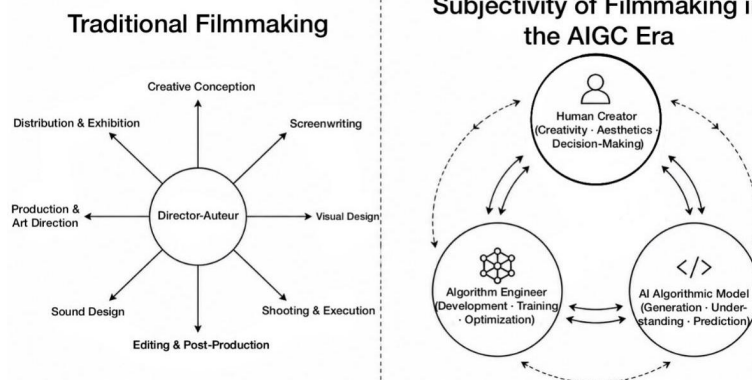


Figure 2. Comparison of Cinematic Creation Subject Modes Between Traditional Cinema and the AIGC Era



Figure 3. AI-Driven Integrated Production Workflow of Film Character-Scene-Storyboard

3. Dimensions and Construction of the New Film Philosophy in the Algorithmic Age

What AIGC brings about is not merely a technological transformation, but a revolution in both ontology and epistemology, which has given rise to an entirely new film philosophy.

3.1 Cinema is No Longer "Recording", but "Algorithmically Generating Worlds"

This constitutes the foundational thesis of the new film philosophy. Bazin's proposition of "the identity between image and reality" has lost its validity in the AIGC era. Cinema no longer treats the "reconstruction" of material reality as its core mission, but processes massive data fragments through "recombination" and "generation". Drawing on Bordwell's theory of "semantic field", Qin Min argues that the semantic field that AIGC-generated films rely on itself has a multi-layered vertical structure (instruction, database, representation), where meaning emerges from the interaction and even interference between different layers, rather than being a simple restoration or faithful depiction of pre-existing reality or the auteur's original intention. Lan Jiang further proposes the concept of "inter-image", which decouples the meaning of images from their direct connection to physical reality, and redefines it as a complex phenomenon of mutual generation interwoven by images, algorithms and human perception. Cinema has become an open, constantly transforming symbolic system, whose "authenticity" no longer needs to be guaranteed by its similarity to the physical world, but is rooted in its "credibility" for algorithms and human perception — the state defined as "post-hyperreality"[4].

3.2 Audiences Shift from Passive Viewing to Co-Creation and Embodied Perception

Traditional cinematic spectatorship is defined by "contemplation" and "gaze". However, in the AIGC and interactive media environment, the role of the audience has undergone a fundamental transformation. First, the audience becomes the "meaning-giver". Due to the ambiguous auteurial intention and abundant meaning gaps in AIGC-generated films, their aura no longer originates from the "presence" of the auteur or the represented object, but from the audience's own "presence" — that is, the audience activates, interprets and completes the text with their own personal experience and emotional investment [8].

Second, the audience becomes a "participant in narrative". In interactive films and film-game integration works, audiences directly intervene in the narrative process through choices, operations and even textual prompts, transforming from "spectators" to "actors" [6]. Finally, the audience's "body" is reclaimed. Immersive media such as VR/AR demand the audience's embodied participation, opening up multi-sensory channels including vision, audition and tactility, and forming a Deleuzian neural resonance of "the brain as screen", which turns cinematic perception into a mind-body integrated "perceptual structure" [2,4].

4. Reflection and Critique on the New Film Philosophy

While AIGC has opened up unlimited possibilities for cinema, its inherent inherent crises have also triggered widespread academic concerns.

4.1 Homogenization, Emotional Superficiality and the Crisis of Artistic Uniqueness

Risk of homogenization: Algorithms are tools that learn and create based on pre-existing datasets, whose "creativity" is essentially probabilistic combination and deduction. This mechanism may lead AIGC-generated films into the trap of "algorithmic labeling", where styles and narratives become monotonous, giving rise to a new form of "digital stereotyped writing"[9]. The aura that Benjamin described is already fading, and in the algorithmic society, this fading process will accelerate for more covert reasons.

Emotional superficiality: Without actual embodied experience, sufficient emotional accumulation and social life experience, AI cannot reasonably comprehend complex emotions such as love, hatred and sacrifice. As a result, the visual spectacles produced by AIGC are often visually stunning, but emotionally hollow and formulaic [5,9]. Cinema is reduced to various forms of "visual feasts" that can hardly move the audience on a profound level.

Crisis of artistic uniqueness: When anyone can generate a film-like work with simple prompts, the long-standing cinematic tradition that relies on years of rigorous training, exceptional talent and high-level intellectual reflection will face severe challenges to its threshold and value. The question of whether the "genius" and unique "style" of artists can coexist with algorithms has become increasingly prominent, and it demands a

systematic response.

4.2 The Balance between Technology and Art

In discussions of these crises, scholars generally regard the balance between technology and art as the core tenet of the new film philosophy.

Upholding the "people-oriented" principle: As Chen Xuguang points out, no matter how technology evolves, the industrial aesthetics of cinema must establish its ethical standards on the basis of "people-oriented" values. AI should be treated as a "prosthesis" that stimulates human creativity, rather than allowing algorithmic logic to completely overwhelm human agency. Humans must remain as the subjective existence that puts forward ideas, conveys emotions and makes value judgments.

Deepening "human-AI co-creation": According to Song Long, "human-AI co-creation" is the paradigm that should be adopted, where the content, artistry and emotional expression delivered by AI must be authentic. Human aesthetic habits, cultural responses and occasional aura-like inspirations can perfectly complement the efficiency and information processing capability of AI, so as to produce works that are rich in imagination and genuinely touching. As Zhao Yi and Zhao Yilun note: "Only when breakthroughs are achieved in the innovation of AI model frameworks, the iteration of computing power supply methods, and the research of quantum computers and neuromorphic computers, can AI bring about truly transformative changes to artistic creation"[10]. "AI art has not only subverted the aesthetic concepts of traditional cinema, but also enabled audiences to gain new aesthetic experiences in the 'hyper-real' and 'spectacular' scenarios"[11].

Returning to "cultural core": In their research on mythological films, Zhang Minghao and Man Shengchong point out that the successful application of AIGC lies in the modern "translation" of traditional cultural resources[11]. Technology should serve cultural expression, and through the construction of "algorithm-myth", it can activate cultural archetypes and respond to the emotional demands of the contemporary era. This reminds us that in the algorithmic age, the cultural gene and emotional core of cinema remain the eternal source of its vitality.

5. Conclusion

The shift from aura to algorithm represents a fundamental paradigm transformation that film

philosophy has ever experienced. The generativity, immateriality and algorithmic characteristics of AIGC technology have invalidated the three foundational assumptions of traditional film philosophy: "auteur-centrism", "representation of reality" and "cult of aura". Instead, it redefines the theoretical connotation of film philosophy through "human-machine coupling", "algorithmic worlds" and "inter-image". Cinema no longer defines itself as a "window" or a "mirror", but as a dynamic, open and interactive "generative interface".

This transformation is releasing enormous productive potential through the "lightweighting" of the film industry, bringing unlimited development possibilities for "imagination consumption". However, at the same time, human subjectivity and artistic value are facing severe crises. Therefore, the new film philosophy does not completely overthrow the old tradition, but carries forward the theoretical lineage in a critically reflective manner. Theoretically, it requires us to rethink the definition of "auteur", "authenticity" and "spectatorship", and analyze various image phenomena in the digital intelligent age with a new epistemology. Practically, we must set limits for the application of technology, never abandon humanistic values, and promote the revival of artistic aura in the algorithmic context through "human-AI co-creation" and the preservation of cultural core. What AIGC brings is not the end of film philosophy, but a complete reset of its core questions. The new film philosophy does not move towards "technological supremacy", nor does it reject algorithms in a retrogressive manner. Instead, it establishes the ideological stance of human-machine symbiosis: regarding AIGC as a media prosthesis that expands the imaginative boundary of moving images, and taking human embodied experience, historical memory and existential predicament as the irreplaceable core of cinema.

Technology is responsible for expanding the formal boundaries of art, while humans are responsible for raising questions, making value judgments and endowing works with the tangible sense of life experience. The core proposition of future film philosophy has transformed into: how to make full use of the generative potential of algorithms, while resisting the aesthetic erosion of algorithmic homogenization, so that moving images can continue to serve as the medium for humans to reflect on themselves and their times.

Future research should take AI agents and spatial intelligence as the driving forces for the evolution of cinematic forms, and simultaneously address the transformative issues in the fields of ethics and art education in the algorithmic age.

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