ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND DIGITAL LITERARY CULTURE: OPPORTUNITIES,CHALLENGES, AND SUBALTERN PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract :

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has significantly altered the landscape of literary production, interpretation, and research within the digital humanities. This paper critically examines the evolving relationship between AI and digital literary culture, emphasizing both its transformative potential and its inherent limitations. It explores AI's role in reshaping creative writing, enabling multidisciplinary research, and influencing the preservation and representation of Adivasi and subaltern literatures. By situating AI within broader debates on creativity, power, ethics, and cultural inclusion, the study argues that while AI offers unprecedented tools for literary innovation and analysis, it also risks reinforcing historical inequalities if deployed uncritically. The paper advocates for participatory, ethically grounded, and culturally sensitive approaches to AI in literary studies to ensure inclusive and responsible knowledge production.

Keywords : Digital Literature, Algorithmic creativity, Literary theory and technology, Adivasi Literature, Subaltern Literature, Ethics of AI in Humanities.

Artificial Intelligence and Digital Literary Culture: Opportunities, Challenges, and Subaltern Perspectives

Introduction :

Artificial Intelligence, once associated primarily with computational logic, engineering, and automation, has gradually become a central force across the humanities. Literature, in particular, has emerged as a fertile ground for experimentation with AI-driven tools that generate, analyze, and reinterpret texts. The emergence of a digital literary culture reflects a convergence of algorithmic writing systems, computational criticism, and human–machine collaboration. This transformation challenges traditional assumptions about authorship, creativity, and interpretive authority.

Scholars in the digital humanities have increasingly examined how AI reshapes methods of textual analysis, archival work, and scholarly interpretation (Terras, 2015; Ramsay,

2016). However, discussions often remain centered on dominant literary traditions, technological efficiency, or theoretical novelty. Less attention has been paid to the implications of AI for marginalized literary cultures, particularly Adivasi and subaltern narratives that have historically existed outside institutional archives and canonical recognition.

This paper seeks to bridge that gap by offering a critical and inclusive analysis of AI's role in digital literary culture. It addresses three interrelated dimensions: AI's impact on digital literature, the application of AI in multidisciplinary research, and the ethical and cultural implications of AI for Adivasi and subaltern literatures. By foregrounding questions of power, representation, and access, the study highlights the necessity of embedding AI within humanistic and socially responsible frameworks.

Artificial Intelligence and Digital Literature :

In literary studies, AI refers to a set of computational techniques—including machine learning, natural language processing, and generative modelling—that enable machines to process and produce human language. These technologies have facilitated the emergence of literary texts that are not merely digitized versions of print works but are born-digital, shaped by algorithmic logic and interactivity.

Digital literature encompasses a wide range of forms such as generative poetry, hypertext fiction, interactive narratives, and algorithmically assisted prose. In these forms, the act of writing becomes distributed across human intention and machine computation. As Hayles (2008) suggests, such literature challenges the boundaries between author, reader, and system, redefining what it means to "write" and "read" in the digital age.

Opportunities and Advantages: AI introduces several significant possibilities for literary creation and scholarship.

AI expands creative horizons by offering writers new stylistic patterns, narrative structures, and linguistic possibilities. Rather than replacing human creativity, AI often functions as a collaborative partner, enabling experimentation and creative risk-taking (Boden, 1998). Writers can explore unfamiliar genres, simulate multiple narrative outcomes, or reimagine traditional storytelling forms.AI contributes to accessibility and democratization. Speech-to-text systems, predictive writing tools, and translation software assist writers with disabilities and nondominant language users, lowering barriers to literary participation. AI enhances textual diversity by enabling multilingual composition and stylistic blending. Computational tools can model linguistic patterns across cultures, allowing literature to transcend geographical and linguistic boundaries (Manovich, 2013).

Finally, AI plays a vital role in archival recovery and preservation. Digitization projects supported by machine learning can identify, restore, and analyze fragile manuscripts, oral narratives, and neglected texts, especially those excluded from institutional archives.

Limitations and Critical Challenges :

One major issue is the destabilization of authorship. AI-generated texts complicate traditional understandings of originality, intention, and ownership, raising legal and

philosophical questions about creative accountability (McGann, 2014).Another concern involves algorithmic bias. AI systems are trained on large datasets that often reflect dominant linguistic, cultural, and ideological norms. As Noble (2018) demonstrates, such systems can reproduce and amplify social inequalities, marginalizing non-standard dialects and minority narratives. Additionally, there is a risk of aesthetic homogenization. Overdependence on algorithmic templates may encourage stylistic conformity rather than genuine innovation, reducing literary expression to predictable patterns. These challenges underscore the need for critical engagement with AI technologies, ensuring that literary creativity remains ethically grounded and culturally diverse.

AI in Multidisciplinary Research with Transformative Potential :

Beyond literature, AI has profoundly influenced multidisciplinary research practices. Its capacity to process vast datasets enables scholars to identify patterns and correlations that would otherwise remain invisible. In the humanities and social sciences, AI facilitates largescale textual analysis, comparative studies, and visualization of cultural trends (Berry & Fagerjord, 2017). In the sciences, AI enhances experimental modelling, predictive analysis, and decision-making processes. Moreover, AI supports interdisciplinary collaboration by integrating textual, visual, and numerical data. This convergence fosters holistic research approaches that transcend disciplinary silos.

However, AI-driven research also presents epistemological challenges. Many AI systems operate as opaque “black boxes,” making it difficult to trace how conclusions are derived. This lack of transparency threatens scholarly accountability and interpretive rigor. There is also concern that data-driven approaches may overshadow theoretical and critical inquiry, particularly in the humanities. Ethical issues related to privacy, consent, and surveillance further complicate AI’s application in research involving sensitive data. Additionally, unequal access to AI infrastructure reinforces global disparities, privileging institutions in the Global North while marginalizing resource-poor research communities.

Digital Humanities, AI, and Subaltern Literatures :

Digital Humanities (DH) integrates computational tools with humanistic inquiry to study cultural artifacts. AI has enhanced DH initiatives by enabling large-scale digitization, language preservation, and interactive archives. Projects focused on endangered languages and oral traditions demonstrate AI’s potential for cultural preservation (Schreibman et al., 2004). When applied ethically, AI can support community-led documentation and dissemination of cultural knowledge.

Adivasi and subaltern literatures represent histories of resistance, ecological knowledge, and collective memory. AI offers both promise and peril in this context. On the one hand, AIassisted digitization can amplify marginalized voices, enabling broader access and scholarly recognition. On the other hand, AI systems trained on dominant linguistic datasets may misinterpret indigenous idioms, metaphors, and epistemologies. Machine translation tools often struggle with culturally embedded expressions, risking misrepresentation and cultural flattening. As Srinivasan (2015) notes, classification systems can replicate colonial hierarchies if not critically redesigned. To address these challenges, participatory AI—where communities

actively shape data collection, model design, and interpretation—is essential.

Literary Theory and AI: AI intersects with literary theory in several important ways.

Posthumanist thought challenges human-cantered models of creativity by recognizing machine agency in narrative production (Hayles, 1999). Algorithmic aesthetics further complicates traditional theories of literary value, as aesthetic judgment becomes entangled with computational metrics. Ethical concerns also emerge regarding AI-generated representations of trauma, history, and cultural memory. These issues demand careful consideration of consent, authenticity, and responsibility in automated creativity.

Artificial Intelligence and Challenges before Folk Literature: Identity, Existence, and Marginal Communities :

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force in contemporary knowledge systems, influencing literary production, cultural documentation, and modes of representation. While AI offers advanced tools for digitization, preservation, and analysis, it simultaneously poses significant challenges to **folk literature and the literary expressions of marginal communities**. Folk and incipient literatures, rooted in oral traditions and collective memory, face risks related to cultural distortion, loss of identity, and technological marginalization in the expanding AI-driven digital ecosystem.

Folk literature is primarily oral, performative, and community-centered, transmitted through myths, songs, rituals, and storytelling practices across generations. These forms resist standardization and textual fixation. AI technologies, however, function through structured datasets, dominant languages, and algorithmic categorization. This structural incompatibility creates a major challenge: oral and indigenous narratives often remain underrepresented or inadequately interpreted within AI-based digital archives (Ong, 1982; Schreibman et al., 2004). As a result, the richness of folk traditions risks being reduced to fragmented or decontextualized data.

The preservation of **cultural identity** is another critical concern. For marginal communities, folk literature serves as a repository of history, ecological knowledge, resistance, and worldview. AI systems trained on mainstream literary corpora often fail to recognize local dialects, symbolic meanings, and culturally embedded expressions. Scholars have warned that such algorithmic bias may reinforce dominant cultural frameworks while marginalizing noncanonical voices (Noble, 2018). This process threatens the authenticity of representation and may lead to the erosion of indigenous identities in digital spaces.

The challenge becomes more pronounced in the case of **incipient literature**, where marginalized communities are transitioning from oral to written literary traditions. AI tools that summarize, translate, or generate content risk overshadowing community-authored narratives. Machine-generated interpretations may acquire undue authority, marginalizing lived experience and collective authorship. This raises ethical questions about authorship, agency, and epistemic ownership (McGann, 2014).

Additionally, unequal access to AI infrastructure exacerbates existing social inequalities. Many marginal communities lack technological resources, digital literacy, and institutional support to engage with AI-based preservation initiatives. This digital divide positions AI as an external force of extraction rather than a participatory cultural tool (Terras, 2015). Without community involvement, AI-driven projects risk reproducing colonial patterns of knowledge appropriation.

Ethical issues of consent and intellectual property further complicate the scenario. Folk literature belongs to collective cultural ownership, yet AI systems often treat such knowledge as open data. Srinivasan (2015) emphasizes that indigenous knowledge systems require culturally sensitive classification and governance frameworks to prevent misappropriation.

In conclusion, while AI has the potential to support the preservation and dissemination of folk literature, it also presents profound challenges to the identity and existence of marginal communities. Addressing these challenges demands participatory AI models, ethical safeguards, and human-centered digital humanities practices. Only through inclusive and culturally grounded approaches can AI become a tool of empowerment rather than erasure for folk and incipient literatures.

Conclusion :

AI's role in literature is fundamentally ambivalent. It enables innovation and inclusion while posing risks of exclusion and homogenization. The central challenge lies in determining whether AI will reinforce existing power structures or serve as a tool for cultural democratization. For subaltern literatures, AI's value lies not in technological novelty but in its capacity to support participatory preservation and interpretation. Similarly, debates around AIassisted creativity invite rethinking authorship as a collaborative and hybrid process rather than a singular human act.

Artificial Intelligence is reshaping digital literary culture in profound ways. It accelerates research, expands creative possibilities, and offers new platforms for marginalized voices. Yet, without ethical vigilance and critical reflection, AI risks reproducing historical inequalities embedded in language, culture, and knowledge systems.A genuinely inclusive literary future requires AI to be context-sensitive, participatory, and guided by humanistic values. When thoughtfully designed and responsibly applied, AI can enrich literary culture while honouring diversity, memory, and social justice.

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