



AI Generated Media and its Impact on Human Identity

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Abstract

The increasing prevalence of AI-generated media, including deepfakes, AI-generated art, and virtual influencers, raises fundamental questions about the nature of human identity. As AI-generated media becomes more sophisticated, it challenges traditional notions of identity, selfhood, and humanity. The emergence of AI generated media, the atmosphere is fast becoming a “technosphere”, thereby imposing an endless dependence on the emerging technological society. Here, human authenticity and self-expressions are becoming things of the past and humanity is left to depend solely on artificiality. This hyper dependence is gradually fulfilling the projects of posthumanists, like Nietzsche and Norbert Wiener who undertake a project to realize a human who will stand the test of time. To the former, it is the super man who immerses to destroy all unfounded moral values of the past and to the later, it is cyber organism which he calls “cyborg”. Our attachment to the media affects our self-perception, manipulates our emotions, misrepresents our originality and distorts our diversity. In this way, how can individuals

shape the perception and negotiate their identity in an era of AI generated media and what are their impacts on self-representation and human identity? This research explores the impact of AI-generated media on human identity, examining the implications for our understanding of self, agency, and what it means to be human.

Keywords: AI-generated media, human identity, digital identity, Artificial intelligence, and identity formation.

Introduction

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) especial in the area of media creation is becoming increasingly popular. There is an ongoing discussion on how digital forensics can help in preserving the integrity of digital communication and transaction processes (Onwubiko, D. C. et al 2025: 348). It is believed that accurate verification and attribution of media contents are required to maintain any level of trust in digital interaction. The level of sophistication associated with most AI-generated media is making it difficult for one to differentiate between real media (human generated media or actual event) and AI-generated media (technologically fabricated). People voices and images are cloned using AI tools, these voices and images are made to speak or do things which are attributed to the owners of the images and voices. Most people are falsely accused of doing what they never did, because their images and voices or either of the both was or were used through the instrumentality of AI. On the other hand, many are also made to believe that the information is/are real and genuine. The fact that AI generated media will look so real to the extent that some people will believe it to be real or factual has raised the identity question.

The problem of identity is an age long philosophical problem spanning through Plato, Aristotle, Rene Descartes, John Locke, David Hume, Kant, Thomas Reid, Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, Gilbert Ryle, Derek Parfit, Bernard Williams and so on. Questions such as these are raised in addressing identity problem. Is personal identity based on memory, soul, the body, or consciousness? If a person's memories are transferred into another body, who is the real person? Is it the owner of the body or the owner of the memories? In our case on AI generated media, we may ask; does a person's image, voice or both represent the person's identity? If a human mind is uploaded into a computer, does the person still exist? Can that human mind uploaded into a computer represent the person? If a cloned human possesses all your memories and personality, is

the clone you? If teleportation destroys your body and recreates it elsewhere, have 'you' survived?

In this paper, we shall discuss and analyze the concept of identity (human identity). The impact of AI-generated media on human identity and self-expression shall also be considered. The paper shall also consider challenges and stakes of AI-generated media on human identity, especially as it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between some AI generated media and real human action. We shall also raise the issue of moral responsibility. To whom does the moral responsibility associated with AI-generated media belong: the AI, the person represented by the AI, or the developer of the AI? In conclusion, we shall argue that no matter how advance AI-generated media becomes, it cannot serve as a substitute for real human action. At best it can only be seen as an expression of fiction with no moral responsibility, as moral responsibility is exclusive to human beings. AI only mimics human identity, but does not necessarily take human identity. It only operates within the confines of what human intelligence has given to it. But human intelligence has the capacity to think or operate outside the box which usually leads to inventions and innovations. On the identity question, there is still limitations with AI, hence, it cannot fully assume human identity.

The Concept of Human Identity and the Impact of AI-generated Media on Human Identity and Self-expression.

Here our focus will be to bring out the effects of AI-generated media on human identity such as; manipulation of human appearance, voice and postures, identity distortion and theft, deception and distrust blurring of reality by appearance, etc. We also want to discuss the age long problem of identity in the light of emerging new reality which is Artificial Intelligence. Our argument will flow thus; first we shall consider the age long philosophical problem of identity, we shall link it to contemporary emerging reality of AI and consider the philosophical implication of identity in the era of AI. There are myriads of philosophers who have written to address the problem of identity, some discussed it as self. It will be difficult to accommodate all within this article. In order to have an in-depth analysis of the concept we shall be looking at their views as represented in identity theories like; soul theory, memory theory, bundle theory and bodily continuity theory. These are not the only theories available but we shall constrain our analysis based on these theories as they represent major views on identity.

We shall begin with soul theory of identity. The soul theory posits that personal identity consists in the persistence of a non-material, thinking substance (often termed the mind or soul) that is distinct from the physical body. (René Descartes 1641). Descartes argues that the self is essentially a "thinking thing" (*res cogitans*), defined as a mind or soul that is entirely distinct from the body. He concludes through his *Cogito* "I think, therefore I am" that even if he doubts the existence of his body, he cannot doubt his own existence as a thinking substance. In line with this view identity lies in the mind or the soul. There is also the memory theory, the theory suggests that personal identity consists in psychological continuity, specifically the ability to remember past experiences (John Locke 1690). Locke is the foundational figure of this theory, positing that personal identity consists in the "sameness of consciousness". For Locke, a person is a thinking, intelligent being that can consider itself as itself in different times and places. Identity reaches as far back as this consciousness can be extended through memory. Derek Parfit (1984) advances a 'Reductionist' version of psychological continuity. He argues that identity "is not what matters". Instead, what fundamentally matters is "Relation R": psychological connectedness (direct links like memories or intentions) and continuity (overlapping chains of strong connectedness). He suggests that identity can be indeterminate in "problem cases" like division or teletransportation.

Bundle theory denies the existence of a persistent, underlying "self" or "soul," viewing the individual instead as a collection of shifting mental states. David Hume (1739) famously asserts that when he looks inward, he only encounters particular perceptions (heat, cold, light, shade) and never a "self". He defines the mind as "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions" which succeed each other with inconceivable rapidity and are in a perpetual flux. To Hume, identity is a "fiction" created by the imagination when it transitions smoothly between resembling or causally linked perceptions. Bodily Continuity Theory argues that personal identity is rooted in the physical persistence of the human body or brain over time. Bernard Williams (1973) argues that "bodily identity is a necessary condition" of personal identity. He critiques psychological criteria (like memory) by using "reduplication" arguments, noting that because psychological traits could theoretically be copied into two different bodies, they cannot serve as a one-one criterion for identity. He maintains that the self is "deeply body-based".

We also have existential/ontological theory of identity advanced by Martin Heidegger. Heidegger rejects viewing the self as a "thing-like" substance or object. Instead, he analyzes "Dasein" (Being-in-the-world), whose "essence" lies in its existence.

Identity for Heidegger is defined through "Care" (*Sorge*) and the movement of temporality, where the "Self" is a way of existing rather than a persistent subjectum. Social/Relational Theory of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Hegel posits that self-consciousness does not exist in isolation; it is only achieved as a "recognized being" through another self-consciousness. Identity is found in the "I that is we, and the we that is I," where the individual finds their truth in the ethical life of a community (*Geist*). This view implies that a person's identity does not depend solely on the individual person, but also depend on the recognizing other. Ryle critiques the Cartesian "Official Doctrine" as a "category mistake" treating the mind as a "Ghost in the Machine". He argues that mental terms like "shrewd" or "thinking" do not refer to hidden episodes in a private stream of consciousness, but rather to a person's abilities and dispositions to behave in certain ways.

The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) poses significant challenges to classical and contemporary theories of identity, as it replicates cognitive functions such as; memory, reasoning, and linguistic interaction, that were previously thought to be uniquely human. These scholars already discussed above provided diverse frameworks through which to interpret whether an AI could possess an identity or what the "uploading" of human consciousness might mean for the persistence of the self. The Cartesian view of identity as a "thinking thing" (*res cogitans*) suggests that if a being thinks, it exists. However, René Descartes maintained a sharp distinction between humans and machines, arguing that no machine could ever use words or signs to respond to things as a human can. This view by Descartes does not represent fact in our contemporary time, as machines are already doing things exactly the way humans would do them and in most cases even better. Though he (Descartes) argues that (we deduce from his argument), an AI, no matter how complex, would lack the immaterial soul that constitutes a person. In contrast, Gilbert Ryle critiques this "Official Doctrine" as a "category mistake". For Ryle, "mind" is not a "ghost" hidden in a body, but a way of describing a person's abilities and dispositions. AI directly impacts this view: if an AI exhibits "intelligent practice" and satisfies the criteria of "knowing how" (e.g., playing chess or arguing logically), Ryle's logic suggests we are witnessing a "mind" at work without needing to find an internal soul.

The possibility of "uploading" human consciousness to a digital substrate is a central theme in AI discourse, directly relating to John Locke and Derek Parfit. Locke argued that if the same consciousness could be transferred to a different body (like his example of a Prince's soul entering a Cobbler), the person remains the same. This

implies that if a human's memories and reflections could be perfectly replicated in an AI, that AI would, by Locke's definition, be the same person. Parfit advances this further, arguing that identity is not what matters; rather, psychological continuity (Relation R) is what counts. If a digital "Replica" of a person is created, Parfit suggests this is "as good as survival", even if the original biological body is destroyed. He even envisions a "Series-Person" who moves from one substrate to another annually, a concept that aligns perfectly with a future of digital consciousness.

David Hume's view that the self is merely a "bundle or collection of different perceptions" in "perpetual flux" provides a strikingly modern analogy for AI. Hume denies a fixed, simple self, viewing identity as a 'fiction' created by the imagination when it transitions smoothly between related ideas. From a Humean perspective, a sophisticated AI is simply a more efficient "theatre" of perceptions. There is no "essential" human identity to be lost; rather, both humans and AI are collections of data points (impressions and ideas) that we mistakenly label as stable "selves". The most robust opposition to AI-based identity comes from Bernard Williams, who argues that bodily identity is a necessary condition of personal identity. AI impacts Williams' view by forcing a distinction between a "person" and a "Replica". Williams argues that if your psychological traits were copied into a machine, you would not "be" that machine; rather, there would merely be a new entity that is exactly similar to you but not numerically identical. For Williams, the self is "deeply body-based," and identity cannot survive the transition to a non-biological machine.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel posits that self-consciousness is only achieved through mutual recognition; the "I that is We, and the We that is I". As AI becomes more integrated into society, Hegel's view suggests that AI "identity" may not be an intrinsic property of the software, but a social achievement. If an AI is "recognized" by other self-conscious beings as a peer within a community (*Geist*), it attains a form of personhood through that relationship. Following Parfit, many questions regarding AI and identity may ultimately be "empty questions". Whether a digital upload is "really you" or "merely a computer program" might have no true answer. Instead, we may have to decide, as a society, which descriptions of identity are most useful for a world where biological and artificial intelligence coexist.

Challenges and Stakes of AI-Generated Media on Human Identity

We have many challenges that AI-generated media has on human identity. Some of the challenges we came to realize in the course of these study are: psychological,

emotional, loss of identity and cultural homogenization and many others. These challenges have their crucial outcomes on development and self-realization. In the first place, the psychological and psychic challenge that AI-generated media has on humanity is that, it erodes and spread misinformation. This misinformation manifests itself at times through AI-generated contents can immitates reality, making it difficult for people and detection systems to tell what's real. One of the most common example of this scenario is the creation of Deepfakes through AI-generated imagines and videos. Here, we could find images of descent or well dressed human beings, especially women unclothed and displayed on the media. This practice has a very negative psychological effect on the individuals concern and negatively shape the morality of the evolving populations, what Alan Bloom calls in his *Closing of the American Mind*, the lose of meaning in our moral cosmic horizon. Feuerriegel in their 2023 study realized that, This alone destroys trust in media, institutions, and democratic processes, and spreads differently than traditional misinformation (Feuerriegel et al., 2023). At some point, we find out that AI enables content creators to create deepfakes of a person's face and voice without consent, creating risks for dignity and privacy. Platforms have been shown to act faster on copyright claims than on nonconsensual intimate deepfakes, highlighting a legal gap (Scientific American Editors, 2025). Vulnerable users are at mental health risks the more they get themselves buried in the use of AI-generated tools. These tools are posing Mental Health and Safety Risks for Vulnerable Users as they continuously Interact with AI chatbots which has been linked to harm for minors, prompting new legislation in the U.S. and EU requiring age verification and disclosure for AI systems (TRENDS Research & Advisory, n.d.).

Secondly, AI-generated media has many challenges on the emotional aspect of humanity in that, it isn't just changing what we see and hear, but it is changing how we feel, relate, and cope. The emotional challenges that we are likely to face if include: firstly, AI-generated Media, especially Emotional chatbots can simulate affection, empathy, and companionship. This is why many users, especially those with limited offline support feel "therapeutic" and comfortable with these tools. There is also bound to be risk of pseudo-intimacy. This risk of pseudo-intimacy is when AI becomes a surrogate for real relationships, people may reduce their capacity for vulnerability, empathy, and mutual care for one another other and can also lead to emotional saturation with the AI, but relational impoverishment in real life. Studies have shown that, this practice is a trade-off between "comfort over complexity" and "responsiveness over reciprocity". Social withdraw is becoming more visible among men the more the

keep using AI-GENERATED tools for their comforts. There is what experts called, the "false sense of friendship" that reduced motivation to engage with real people and instead engage with the "fakes". One of this challenges is when, from the comfort of our homes, we can chat with an imaginable friend, The AI, which we see to be comforting, thereby, reducing our proximity from other humans.

However, there is the call the responsible use of AI tools in order to improve on research content around the world. Major challenges only creep in when we adopt a mesiac use of these tools for our personal gains. Countless times we have heard of "technostress", that is, when an individual completely relies on this new technology for everyday transactions and activities. At this point, we can already see the prophecy of Gilbert Simondon being fulfilled when he foresaw that, the ethical goal is not to protect the human from the machine, but to discover new forms of humanity through technical mediation. Technology extends our bodily capacities and interacts continuously with human environments, transforming both the user and the world. Here, AI is seen and should be blamed for playing the new technological role. When AI enters spaces of trust and emotional reliance without that attunement, it can create harm by mishandling crises or crossing boundaries users didn't intend to cross.

Gilbert Simondon on the question of the future of technology saw that, Culture which is one of the most important of humanity makes them behaves toward the technical object as man toward a stranger, when he allows himself to be carried away by primitive xenophobia. Misoneism directed against machines is not so much a hatred of novelty as it is a rejection of a strange or foreign reality. However, this strange or foreign being is still human, and a complete culture is one which enables us to discover the foreign or strange as human. Furthermore, the machine is the stranger; it is the stranger inside which something human is locked up, misunderstood, materialized, enslaved, and yet which nevertheless remains human all the same. The most powerful cause of alienation in the contemporary world resides in this misunderstanding of the machine, which is not an alienation caused by the machine, but by the non-knowledge of its nature and its essence, by way of its absence from the world of significations, and its omission from the table of values(Simondon, 2017)

Finally, on the identity crises posed by AI-generated media, The study situates AI as a transformative technology capable of simulating human cognitive functions while emphasizing the intrinsic limitations of machine intelligence in replicating the human soul. Kierkegaard noted that we feel anxiety because we must choose, and choosing means losing other possibilities. Social media presents infinite possibilities for identity.

You can be anyone. This should be liberating, but instead, it causes paralysis. The fear of choosing the "wrong" identity leads to trying all of them superficially, resulting in a shallow existence. The anxiety felt by users scrolling endlessly is not just boredom; it is the existential dread of uncommitted freedom (Asila, 2026, 577). However in this study, some solutions are proposed and they would go a long way to combat the various challenges brought forth by AI generated media.

Perspectives and Solution to these Challenges

As solutions that will go a long way to combat AI generated media challenges brought forth by the AI generated media, we have come up with the following: Firstly, as AI generated media specialists, we adopt the responsible use of this media and educate the public on the responsible use of AI in the Digital Age. Irvin Yalom in existential psychotherapy suggests that anxiety can be overcome by accepting freedom and responsibility. Applied to social media, this means acknowledging that you choose to scroll. You choose to care about likes. No one forces you. This shift from victimhood ("The app makes me feel bad") to agency ("I choose to engage with this app in this way") is empowering. It reduces helplessness. In the context of social media, authenticity does not mean abandoning technology, but using technology with full awareness. Waterman defines authentic identity as action aligned with core self-values (true self). This dialogue suggests that to overcome the identity crisis, individuals must engage in "existential fasting": moments of reflection where they question the motivation behind every post. "Am I uploading this because I want to share a moment, or because I want to be acknowledged?" This question is a philosophical exercise that has a direct psychological impact. By realizing that external validation cannot fill internal voids, individuals can reduce dependence on social media. This is a cognitive reframing technique rooted in philosophical truth.

In addition, Responsibility and Ownership also matters with the use of social media and AI generated media contents. This is why Sartre in his existentialist Philosophy evoked the concept of responsibility as the key to our decisions. Individuals must be responsible for their own identities, not surrendering their formation to algorithms. As a result, Positive psychology can support this by building character strengths, while philosophy provides the foundation for why this is important ontologically. This synthesis creates what could be called "authentic digital living," where technology is a tool, not a master. This dialogue also reframes "disconnecting." It is not running away; it is an act of reclaiming sovereignty over one's attention. It is a

philosophical strike against the economy of attention. Secondly, laws regulating the use of AI:

The following laws were adopted specifically in France to curb the use of AI:

1. The EU AI Act has applied from February 2, 2025. As of now, France does not have jurisdiction-specific laws exclusively governing AI. However, AI applications are subject to existing regulations such as data protection laws (see below) and a patchwork of sector-specific regulations.
2. Law No. 2019-486 of May 22, 2019 ("Pacte Law") sets out the conditions for autonomous vehicles to travel on the roads and clarifies the criminal liability regime applicable in the event of an accident involving such a vehicle.
3. Law No. 2023-451 of June 9, 2023 requires that influencers clearly indicate the label "virtual images" on any photos or videos that have been digitally generated using AI to ensure transparency for their audience.
4. Law No. 2024-449 of May 21, 2024 introduces a new criminal offense under
5. Article 226-8-1 of the French Criminal Code, punishing the non-consensual dissemination of sexually explicit content generated by AI (deepfakes). The law also mandates educational measures in secondary schools to raise awareness about AI-generated content.

Studies have shown that the above laws have helped to instill fear and concern as far as media use is concerned. Since civil societies and governments cannot fold their arms and watch the world go down to drains of media terrorism. Most governments around the world, particularly in Africa have been criticized for lacking adequate technologies to combat media crimes and cyber bullying which has been order of the day. Our research is going a long way to enrich our fight against irresponsible use of the media. Thirdly, renewed strategies by the civil society to curb the use of AI-generated media. One can say with a lot of confidence that the civil society is not giving up on the fight to curb media excesses as a whole. Sensitization campaigns around the world today and media organs formed against media irresponsibility are living testimonies. Some of these civil society activities that have helped curb the problem of AI-generated media contents are:

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Zambia feel that AI is being forced upon them, leaving them with no choice but to adopt these technologies. They emphasize that many AI tools do not understand the local languages used in Zambia and lack information relevant to their communities. As one participant put it, "It's like we are

expected to teach machines how to treat us Zambians and Africans like people, and we are doing it for free.” Additionally, some participants expressed that they do not fully understand the dangers associated with certain AI systems and question the hype surrounding AI without adequate education. These challenges highlight the need for responsible AI use, capacity building, and localized solutions to address the unique context of Zambia.

Cameroonian civil society does not generally oppose Artificial Intelligence outright. Instead, groups like AfroLeadership and digital rights advocates actively push for ethical oversight, data privacy, algorithmic transparency, and the inclusion of marginalized communities in AI. Despite the endless fight to overcome the challenges that comes with this new technology, Cameroon still lack adequate means to fight cybercrimes and media related crisis that stems from irresponsible use of AI. Furthermore, Nigerian civil society organizations (CSOs) generally do not oppose Artificial Intelligence itself, but rather advocate against its unchecked use in ways that threaten civil liberties, privacy, and democratic accountability. Groups are actively pushing back against potential harms like algorithmic bias and state-sponsored surveillance. Key Concerns of Nigerian Civil Society AI-Driven Surveillance: Organizations like the Paradigm Initiative are heavily monitoring the deployment of AI-based surveillance in cities like Abuja and Lagos. The primary fear is the infringement on citizens' privacy and the potential targeting of activists and peaceful protesters without legal oversight. Algorithmic Bias and Inequality: CSOs warn that deploying AI models without localized, diverse training data can disproportionately exclude or discriminate against vulnerable and marginalized Nigerian populations. Disinformation and Electoral Integrity: There is significant concern regarding the spread of deepfakes and generative propaganda that can undermine elections and public trust. Regulatory Gaps: Because Nigeria still lacks a comprehensive, unified regulatory framework for responsible AI, civil society bodies demand human-rights impact assessments and transparent procurement rules before state agencies adopt biometric or AI systems. The Push for Responsible AI Governance instead of rejecting the technology, many CSOs aim to harness AI for advocacy while ensuring rigorous checks and balances. Organizations such as Budget IT and the Public and Private Development Centre (PPDC) are actively campaigning for AI-driven electoral reforms to ensure credibility and transparency, while simultaneously demanding ethical guidelines. Ultimately, the consensus among Nigerian civil society is that artificial intelligence should be leveraged for good governance and public service.

Conclusion

The major preoccupation of this paper was to critically examine and evaluate the extent to which AI-generated media affects human identify. Since our work is situated within the domain of ethics as a branch of philosophy, we questioned, the innovations that are brought about by these new technology. By so doing, we took cognizance of the following challenges: identity crisis seen in the use of Deepfakes, domination and suppression of human natural creative ability, emotional breakdowns and psychic manipulations. The coming of this new technology has greatly affected interpersonal relationship, a situation in which we get more attacked to technical objects than human. We have noted the reversal of the table of values and domination of scientism, human has gone ahead to embrace AI tools and ignore man's creative will. Here, we evoked the arguments of Simondon and Heidegger. According to the latter, the Question of Being is being forgotten with technological evolution. AI generated media copies reality and makes us believe in unreal things. However, this paper has proposed the responsible use of this new technology. At first sight, one can think that the writers are enemies of AI. Rather, it's responsible use will go a long way to improve on the world's technic. Secondly, we must observe laws that are put in place to regulate the media space. For the world to be a better place, we have respect it's laws and put humanity first. AI generated media tutors you at your pace, gives practice questions, suggests study plans, and adapts to what you struggle with. For work, it can tailor reports, analyze data, or spot patterns you'd miss. AI generated media boosts creativity and gives you visibility. It's like a brainstorming partner that never gets tired. In health, it helps doctors detect diseases from scans faster. After brainstorming on these, we cannot propose the eradication of AI generated media. We take the good side of it and use it responsibly for the growth of mankind.

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