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The Impact of Deepfakes on Creativity Labour and Ethics in Cinema and Advertising

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ABSTRACT

Deepfake technology has quickly become a revolutionary force in film and advertising, changing audience engagement, creative development, and performance aesthetics. Deepfakes, which are powered by sophisticated AI and machine learning, allow for digital face-swapping, voice replication, de-aging, and synthetic performances that lower production costs and increase artistic possibilities. They encourage customized advertising campaigns, multilingual endorsements, and adaptable company messaging. But these advancements also bring with them serious issues with identity rights, labour displacement, and ethical responsibility. As AI-generated material replaces conventional roles, background actors, voice actors, models, and technical crews become more vulnerable. This has led to serious issues about digital likeness rights and equitable pay. Consent, authenticity, and the possible abuse of synthetic media in deceptive or manipulative message raise ethical questions. The twin effects of deepfakes—creative promise and socio-ethical risk—are examined in this article, which makes the case for fair regulatory frameworks, open business practices, and enhanced labour rights. In the end, the research emphasizes the necessity of using deepfake technology responsibly to guarantee that innovation is consistent with labour fairness, creative

integrity, and public confidence.

Introduction

One of the most revolutionary and disruptive developments in modern media creation is the advent of deepfake technology. Deepfakes, which are powered by generative adversarial networks (GANs) and sophisticated machine learning models, make it possible to digitally create faces, voices, and complete performances with previously unheard-of precision (Goodfellow et al., 2014). Deepfakes were formerly thought of as a technological curiosity, but they have quickly made their way into mainstream creative sectors, especially film and advertising, where there is a growing need for visual innovation, cost effectiveness, and personalized content (Chesney & Citron, 2019). A substantial change in the ethics, economics, and aesthetics of mediated representation is indicated by their integration.

Deepfakes have created new creative opportunities in film, such as the ability to de-age actors, recreate deceased actors, and improve digital duplicates to eliminate the need for intricate visual effects pipelines (Roose, 2021). Although these technologies provide filmmakers more freedom, they also raise concerns about artistic labour, authenticity, and the future of physical performance. Concerns are raised regarding the displacement of stunt artists, background performers, and even major actors whose likenesses may be duplicated without physical presence as AI-generated actors grow more convincing (Smith, 2020). These changes are in line with more general discussions concerning automation and precarity in the creative sectors, where technological advancement frequently results in decreased job security (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2017).

Using a single actor's digitally replicated face or voice, deepfakes in advertising allow for hyper-personalized content, multilingual endorsements, and affordable campaigns that can be expanded across regions (Kietzmann et al., 2020). The lines between simulation, persuasion, and authenticity are becoming increasingly hazy as brands use AI-driven influencers and artificial ambassadors. However, these developments also bring up moral questions about representational integrity, consent, and consumer deceit. The requirement for industry responsibility and governmental control is further heightened by the possible misuse of deepfake technology, such as creating fake brand endorsements or influencing public personalities (Westerlund, 2019).

When considered collectively, deepfakes signify a paradigm change in the way that performance, identity, and narrative are conceptualized in film and advertising. They place the technology at the centre of discussions on media ethics, labour rights, and the politics of digital representation while

simultaneously providing creative liberty and increased ethical complexity. To ensure responsible adoption in the creative industries, a balanced framework incorporating technical innovation, legal safeguards, and ethical principles is necessary. This article examines how deepfakes alter creative processes, replace labour, and test moral limits.

Literature Review

Deepfake technology, which is based on generative adversarial networks (GANs), has revolutionized the creation of visual media, especially in advertising and film. Goodfellow et al. (2014) laid the foundation for modern deepfake applications by introducing GANs as a potent architecture capable of creating extremely realistic synthetic pictures. According to academics, deepfakes are a paradigm shift in mediated authenticity because they allow for manipulation that is more realistic and accessible than standard visual effects (VFX) (Chesney & Citron, 2019). Deepfake technology has been investigated for digital de-aging, rebuilding deceased actors, and improving performance continuity in movies, raising concerns about the distinctions between real and artificial representation (Rini, 2020). Deepfakes extend long-standing digital practices, according to research on the film industry, but they also have previously unheard-of ethical and labour ramifications. While VFX traditionally enhanced performances, Beltrán and Middleton (2021) point out that deepfakes can completely replace or replicate them, obfuscating authorship and permission. Case studies like The Irishman and the Marvel series show how AI-enabled techniques made digital de-aging economically feasible while cutting production costs and time (Smith, 2022). However, detractors contend that these applications might increase worries about contractual asymmetry by transferring authority from performers to studios that possess the rights to digital likenesses (McMullan, 2021).

Deepfakes allow for hyper-personalized material in advertising, such as audience-specific campaigns and multilingual celebrity endorsements. The 2021 Cadbury commercial with a deep faked Shah Rukh Khan is seen by academics as a seminal example of AI-driven commercial creativity (Bose, 2022). According to Kapoor (2023), these developments fundamentally alter branding tactics by enabling businesses to target certain groups without the need for frequent in-person shootings. However, research also cautions that deepfake advertising runs the danger of influencing audience trust since AI-generated endorsements might erode the openness that is often anticipated in commercial communication and obfuscate authenticity (Vaccari & Chadwick, 2020). In academic discourse, labour displacement is a major topic. Background actors, stand-ins, dubbing artists, and voice actors are among the roles that deepfakes promise to automate (Soto, 2021). Recent talks between SAG-AFTRA reveal increased concerns about

the uncontrolled use of digital duplicates and AI-generated performances, indicating that creative labour markets may experience structural change (Tepis, 2022). According to academic viewpoints within political economy frameworks, deepfake technologies increase capitalist demands for efficiency, decreasing the need for human labour and consolidating control within large studios and tech companies (Hesmondhalgh, 2013).

The literature is dominated by ethical issues, especially those pertaining to consent, identity rights, and possible abuse. Because they employ synthetic representations that are not connected to actual performance, scholars emphasize that even approved deepfakes violate conventional ethical standards (Rini, 2020). Significant gaps in international legislation are shown by legal assessments, and current frameworks are unable to handle problems like ownership of digital likenesses and misleading advertising (Kietzmann et al., 2020). To reduce these hazards, researchers contend that strong regulatory interventions, watermarking, and clear labelling are necessary (Floridi, 2021). The research generally agrees on one main point: deepfakes have significant creative and financial advantages, but they can undermine public confidence, undermine ethical standards, and destabilize labour arrangements. To ensure sustainable usage in film and advertising, scholars generally agree that technical progress should be balanced with ethical, legal, and labour concerns.

Theoretical Framework

The Political Economy of Media and Posthumanism are two complimentary theoretical frameworks that may be used to analyse deepfakes in movies and advertisements. When taken as a whole, these frameworks show how the ontology of the human body, labour patterns, profit systems, and identity politics are all altered by synthetic media technologies in modern visual culture.

A structural lens for comprehending how deepfake technology is ingrained in capitalist logics of efficiency, cost reduction, and commodification is provided by The Political Economy of Media. Media creation has always depended on labour-intensive creative processes including visual effects artists, technologists, performers, and advertising specialists. By automating crucial elements of performance, voice replication, and visual manipulation, deepfakes upend this ecosystem and let studios and brands to lower production costs, shorten production times, and improve output flexibility. As digital copies and AI-generated performances replace real performers, backdrop artists, photographers, or voice actors, human labour becomes increasingly risky under this paradigm. An actor's face or voice may be leased, reused, or changed indefinitely without their actual presence, making the commercialization of identity

crucial. This increases the commercial worth of the actor's body by turning it into a replicable asset, but also undercutting the conventional labour protections associated with physical performance.

Political economy also highlights the ways in which profit systems influence the adoption of new technologies. In addition to investing in deepfake technology for innovative experimentation, corporations also do so to gain a competitive edge and lessen reliance on labour unions, location-based shooting, or logistical limitations. As a result, power disparities worsen workers lose negotiating leverage when their digital counterparts potentially take the place of future labour, while media conglomerates and advertising giants gain influence over synthetic representations. Thus, questions of exploitation, ownership, contract renegotiation, and the necessity of regulatory frameworks that safeguard labour rights in AI-mediated businesses are highlighted by the political economy approach.

Posthumanism offers a philosophical perspective to comprehend how deepfakes alter ideas of identity, embodiment, and authenticity in addition to this structural critique. Posthumanism presents identity as fluid, hybrid, and mediated by technology, challenging the notion of the human as a distinct, fixed, biologically based entity. By combining human resemblance, machine learning techniques, and virtual performance to create digital bodies, deepfakes bring this hybridity to life. Traditional distinctions between the real and the artificial are undermined by these hybrid identities, which raise concerns about what defines a "performance," who the performer is, and how authenticity is created in mediated contexts.

In keeping with post-humanist concepts of technology augmentation, digital de-aging, resurrected performers, and synthetic performances in film transcend the body beyond its biological bounds. AI-generated spokespersons or virtual brand ambassadors in advertising represent a move toward post-biological identities, in which marketing communication no longer need a real human presence. This illustrates a posthuman state in which authorship, continuity, and physiological integrity become dispersed among technology systems.

A multifaceted understanding of deepfakes is made possible by the combination of Political Economy and Posthumanism. The former reveals systemic injustices and economic exploitation, while the latter examines the ontological and cultural ramifications of digital body building. By including these frameworks, the research can document how deepfakes concurrently alter the meaning of embodiment, labour relations, and profit mechanisms in modern media sectors.

Deepfakes in Cinema

Deepfake technology has quickly become a revolutionary force in modern film, changing production processes as well as creative possibilities. Deepfakes, which are based on cutting-edge machine learning algorithms, especially Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs), enable filmmakers to edit or reproduce human features, emotions, and voices with previously unheard-of realism. Filmmakers are now able to experiment with new kinds of representation and push visual narrative beyond conventional boundaries because to this technical advancement. Digital de-aging, which is used to depict people in many timeframes or bring back the youthful appearance of famous performers, is one of the most noteworthy advances. AI-assisted methods have been used in movies like The Irishman and other Marvel projects to minimize manual VFX effort while producing more fluid, lifelike results. By offering more natural face transitions and eliminating the need for intensive motion-capture or prosthetic makeup, deepfakes expedite this process. In a similar vein, deepfake technologies have made it easier to digitally resuscitate performers who have passed away, enabling filmmakers to honour legacy characters or finish incomplete projects. Despite being contentious, this method allows for stories that would not otherwise be conceivable, maintaining narrative consistency and increasing creative flexibility.

Picture 1: De-aging Process in the movie The Irishman

Additionally, deepfakes provide significant advantages in stunt coordination and performance enhancement. Without having to reshoot, directors may subtly change an actor's facial expressions or convey different emotional tones. Deepfake overlays on stunt performers lower safety hazards for action-packed movies while preserving actor continuity. High-quality effects are now more affordable for small filmmakers and local businesses who were previously limited by financial constraints because to this

efficiency's contribution to shorter production times and lower production costs. Deepfakes pose serious problems for authenticity, ethics, and cinematic labour notwithstanding these advancements. Labour displacement is a significant issue, especially for body doubles, background actors, and stunt performers. The ability to imprint AI-generated faces onto digital or physical bodies puts lower-tier positions at risk of being replaced, upending established hierarchies in the film industry. The emergence of digital duplicates calls into question the rights and ownership of an actor's likeness. In the absence of any contractual rules, studios could utilize an actor's deep faked picture in scenes or other movies outside of the original consent.

Deepfakes ethically blur the distinction between real and fake. Although VFX modifications have long been accepted by audiences, hyper-realistic deepfakes cast doubt on the idea of a "real" performance and raise questions about the diluting of artistic labour and emotional trickery. The capacity to alter performers' facial expressions or place them in scenarios they haven't performed in might erode audience confidence in the authenticity of performances. The possibility of abuse poses major risks to one's image and the ethics of the profession, ranging from unauthorized edits to creating scenarios that performers did not agree of. Lastly, deepfakes add to the expanding discussion over the legitimacy of movies. Hyper-synthetic images, according to some critics, distort the viewer's emotional connection and undermine performing technique. Some argue that, when included openly, deepfakes are only the next step in cinema technology, like the advancements in computer-generated imagery from earlier decades. Even if deepfakes are a potent tool for innovative filmmaking, careful regulation, moral standards, and industry-wide discussion are needed to make sure the advantages of creativity do not outweigh the difficulties related to labour rights, consent, and authenticity.

Deepfakes in Advertising

Deepfake technology is becoming a revolutionary tool in modern advertising, having quickly advanced beyond experimental digital manipulation. Advertisers can now easily construct customized, multilingual, and highly adaptable ads by utilizing AI-driven face synthesis, voice cloning, and hyper-realistic video production. Although this change is a significant advancement in focused communication, it also poses complicated ethical, social, and legal problems that undermine the legitimacy of commercial advertising. Personalizing brand communication is one of the most important applications of deepfakes in advertising. Advertisers may develop customized versions of the same commercial for various audience segments using AI-generated voices and faces, eliminating the need for repeated in-person shootings.

Picture 2: AI Driven Customized Ad Films

Shah Rukh Khan's 2021 Cadbury campaign, in which AI technology produced customized films of the star promoting tiny, regional companies around India, is an often-mentioned example. Deepfake methods made it possible to create thousands of personalized advertisements for this campaign, including local store names into the actor's voice and lip movements. This illustrated how, by tailoring basic content to a variety of consumer communities, synthetic media may improve brand engagement, fortify emotional links, and increase accessibility.

Deepfakes enable advertisers to use a single actor to create language endorsements. Global sports businesses, for instance, have tried using AI-generated players to communicate messages in many languages, allowing for smooth localization. In a similar vein, fashion businesses are using virtual ambassadors—completely AI-generated influencers—to promote items or engage with customers on social media. These developments save manufacturing costs, broaden brand awareness, and boost marketing creativity. There are significant hazards associated with these advantages. Deception is a major worry as viewers would not be able to tell the difference between real and AI-generated endorsements. The distinction between authorized and unauthorized usage becomes hazy when celebrities' voices or appearances may be artificially replicated with almost flawless fidelity. This raises moral questions about consent and consumer manipulation. An unapproved deepfake advertising, for example, may mislead viewers and undermine public confidence by fraudulently portraying a public figure endorsing a product they never committed to support.

Over-personalization, in which hyper-targeted advertisements use fake media to sway certain emotional or cultural sensibility, is another significant problem. The persuasive power of advertising becomes more

intrusive when deepfake-powered ads modify tone, facial expressions, or linguistic nuances to appeal to personal preferences. Academics contend that these methods might exacerbate behavioural microtargeting, resulting in unclear and perhaps exploitative communication strategies. Deepfakes raise issues with labour ethics in the advertising sector. Traditional positions for voice actors, junior actors, presenters, and models run the risk of being replaced when businesses use synthetic models or AI-generated reproductions of human actors. The ownership of digital likeness and the necessity of legal frameworks to control the use, licensing, and replication of an individual's picture in commercial contexts are issues that come up.

Lastly, the public's confidence in brand communication is at risk because to deepfake advertising. Advertising may lose its credibility as a persuasive tool if people start to question the veracity of commercial statements. Experts advise more stringent industry regulations, consent-based digital likeness agreements, and open AI disclosures to reduce these threats. Even while deepfakes transform advertising innovation and personalization, their usage needs strict ethical monitoring, labour safeguards, and regulatory clarity to avoid abuse and preserve public confidence.

Labour Displacement and Creative Industry Reconfiguration

Deepfake technology's use in movies and advertisements has drastically changed labour arrangements, making the creative staff more vulnerable as well as more efficient. Deepfakes threaten occupations that depend on physical presence, manual expertise, and iterative creative labour, even as they provide producers with more affordable alternatives to traditional performance capture and visual effects. Background actors and extras are among the most impacted groups since their likenesses may now be digitally duplicated and repeated without needing them on site. The Mandalorian and several Marvel movies, for instance, have experimented with artificial crowd generation, suggesting a move away from large-scale extras and toward AI-generated composites. In a similar vein, as producers depend more on synthetic duplicates to lower risk, expense, and logistical complexity, stunt performers may be displaced.

AI-generated voices and digital brand ambassadors undergo labour substitution for voice actors and models in advertising. One prominent example is Cadbury's AI-powered campaign with a synthetic Shah Rukh Khan, which allowed for thousands of customized advertisements without the need for further shoots or performer participation. While these technologies simplify production, they reduce chances for mid-level performers, photographers, and studio technicians who have historically worked in commercial settings. Post-production workers are also impacted by deepfake-driven automation, especially rookie VFX artists who used to perform jobs like face replacement or cleaning. Entry-level jobs, which are

essential for skill development, are becoming less common as AI automates these procedures. This reorganization runs the danger of depleting the talent pipeline that is essential to the long-term viability of the sector. In response, labour unions like FWICE (India) and SAG-AFTRA (USA) are proposing measures including contract transparency terms, residual compensation for AI-driven replicas, and required consent for the usage of digital likenesses. These metrics show how creative labour is becoming more hybrid, fusing computational manipulation with human performance. In the end, deepfakes increase creative possibilities, but to guarantee fairness and long-term workforce stability, they need strong ethical and labour frameworks.

Ethical and Legal Boundaries

Consent, representation, deception, and ownership of digital identity are the main ethical and legal issues raised using deepfakes in movies and advertisements. Consent—whether a person has consented to the use of their face, voice, or performance for synthetic reproduction—is one of the most contentious ethical questions. For example, despite clearance from his estate, the digital resuscitation of actor Peter Cushing in Rogue One raised questions about whether posthumous consent can ever be completely ethical. In a similar vein, the 2021 Cadbury advertisement campaign, which used a deepfaked Shah Rukh Khan to promote local stores, crossed the lines between permitted innovation and the moral awkwardness of imitating a real actor's look without direct performance. Deceptive manipulation is another ethical issue. Deepfakes may create narrative sequences or endorsements that are incredibly lifelike but deceptive. Synthetic doubles and de-aging technologies in movies may deceive viewers about what is "real," which might undermine their faith in audiovisual narrative. A deepfake influencer making customized product pitches in advertising raises the possibility of hyper-targeted persuasion that verges on exploitation.

Deepfakes have legal implications for copyright, privacy, and personality rights. Although many nations do not have deepfake legislation, the foundations that are in place still apply. Conflicts involving unauthorized digital copying revolve around personality rights, which safeguard an individual's voice and image. For instance, US musician Jay-Z filed a lawsuit claiming that his likeness and brand identification were violated when his voice was deepfaked in internet spoof videos. The SAG-AFTRA discussions, which now demand express authorization and remuneration for AI-generated copies, reflect the concerns that voice performers throughout the world have about unlicensed training of AI models on their voices. Frameworks for regulations are changing. While India's IT Rules oblige platforms to delete modified information that affects people, the EU AI Act requires openness when AI-generated content is utilized.

Strong legal regulation and moral standards are still necessary to safeguard artistic integrity, workers' rights, and public confidence as deepfakes erode authenticity.

Discussion

Deepfake technology's introduction into movies and advertisements marks a turning point in visual culture that both opens new creative possibilities and upends long-standing frameworks of authenticity, ethics, and labour. A change toward a more effective and aesthetically ambitious media environment is indicated by the technology's potential for innovation, whether through seamless de-aging, performance enhancement, or personalized advertising. However, these developments also push the creative industries to address basic issues about the nature of authorship, performance, and human presence in mediated narrative. The increasing uncertainty around authenticity is one of the main problems our investigation highlights. The distinction between real and fake performances gets hazy when digital copies can mimic an actor's appearance or provide an endorsement without the actor's actual presence. This uncertainty affects audience trust, especially in advertising, as deepfakes may increase engagement or raise suspicions of dishonest behaviour. As a result, transparency becomes crucial, necessitating stricter ethical standards and the labelling of synthetic elements.

The discussion is made more difficult by labour displacement. Deepfakes save production costs and provide filmmakers more creative options, but they also jeopardize the jobs of junior technicians, dubbing artists, background actors, and voice actors. Although they try to address these issues, emerging contract models—like licensing digital likenesses or negotiating residuals for synthetic usage—remain unequal and undeveloped across international businesses. Technical proficiency in AI and digital compositing may be valued more highly than conventional craft skills in the reconfiguration of the creative profession. This change emphasizes how urgent it is to create labour laws that guarantee equity, consent, and long-term employment. Deepfakes pose an ethical threat to the concepts of identity and representation. A person's likeness might be utilized improperly or deceptively in the absence of stringent consent procedures. Cinema has started to embrace more regulated and approved usage, yet the fast-paced, profit-driven world of advertising increases the possibility of manipulation. This emphasizes the necessity of legal frameworks that protect digital persons and promote ethical innovation. The conversation emphasizes that finding a careful balance is critical to the future of deepfakes in movies and advertisements. Although the technology has enormous creative potential, its use must be supported by strong moral principles, open procedures, and labour laws. Deepfakes will continue to change visual

culture, but how businesses, legislators, and viewers navigate the shifting lines between reality, creativity, and human agency will determine how they affect society in the long run.

Conclusion

The use of deepfake technology in movies and advertisements represents a significant shift in the creation, performance, and consumption of visual storytelling. What started out as a specialized AI project has quickly developed into a widely used creative tool that has the power to completely alter production environments. On the one hand, deepfakes provide amazing opportunities: filmmakers may experiment with digital de-aging, resuscitate historical characters, create complex visual effects at lower costs, and push the bounds of creativity without being constrained by physical limitations. In a similar vein, advertisers may use multilingual endorsements, develop highly customized campaigns, and keep their brand visible even when live artists aren't there. These developments can reinvent storytelling aesthetics and improve creative efficiency. But there are equally important obstacles associated with this technical advancement. Labour displacement is accelerated by the increasing use of synthetic media, particularly for technical crews, voice actors, background performers, and younger artists whose jobs run the risk of being completely mechanized. Traditional craft labour is at risk of marginalization as production companies embrace AI-driven efficiency, posing pressing concerns about fair remuneration, creative ownership, and financial stability. The ethical issues of permission, identity manipulation, authenticity, and responsibility are further complicated by deepfake technology. Digital likenesses might be abused or exploited in the absence of strong legal frameworks, making it difficult to distinguish between acceptable artistic experimentation and dishonest or coercive tactics.

By undermining the presumption that performances and visuals depict concrete truth, deepfakes pose a challenge to public confidence. This affects audience perception as well as the legitimacy of media organizations, companies, and the entertainment sector. Transparency and openness become crucial instruments for upholding moral principles and audience trust as synthetic material becomes more common. In the end, deepfakes represent a dual trajectory: they demand greater accountability from producers, legislators, and viewers while also opening new creative possibilities. A balanced strategy that promotes innovation while firmly upholding labour rights, ethical standards, and regulatory monitoring is necessary to guarantee that deepfake technology has a beneficial impact on the future of film and advertising. In an increasingly AI-mediated world, the future of synthetic media will depend not just on technical progress but also on everyone's dedication to preserving human dignity, creative integrity, and societal trust.

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