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**DEEFAKE: THE CROSSOVER BETWEEN PORNOGRAPHY  
AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)**

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**Abstract:** The Internet, often considered as the great public agora, a space that should be free and democratic, has become an environment where systems of inequality and discrimination, including sexism, are replicated and reinforced. In this paper, we will focus on the analysis of misogyny that can be clearly detected in various Internet spaces, from male forums to the deepfakes -fake pornographic videos created by Artificial Intelligence (AI). It is essential to understand that technology and robotics do not emerge in societies without culture or values. On the contrary, these tools reflect and perpetuate norms and stereotypes that already exist in the societies that develop them. Violence against the body of the other becomes easier when we stop perceiving it as an equal, when we break the bond of empathy that should unite us. Deepfakes and other forums that distribute AI-generated sexual content incur precisely in this depersonalization, reducing women to mere manipulable objects. This process of objectification not only perpetuates misogyny, but also strips victims of their autonomy and dignity. Therefore, the deepfake phenomenon, along with other AI-generated sexual content, not only invades women's privacy, but also reinforces patriarchal power structures and misogynistic attitudes. The lack of specific regulation and the ease with which these technologies can be accessed further aggravate this problem.

**Keywords:** deepfake, prostitution, pornography, Artificial Intelligence, patriarchy, technology, feminism, objectification, gender, depersonalization.

## **DEEFAKE: ÎNCRUCIȘAREA DINTRE PORNOGRAFIE ȘI INTELIGENȚA ARTIFICIALĂ (AI)**

**Rezumat:** Internetul, adesea considerat ca marea agora publică, un spațiu care ar trebui să fie liber și democratic, a devenit un mediu în care sistemele de inegalitate și discriminare, inclusiv sexismul, sunt reproduse și consolidate. În această lucrare, ne vom concentra asupra analizei misoginismului care poate fi detectat în mod clar în diferite spații de pe internet, de la forumuri masculine la deepfakes - videoclipuri pornografice false create de inteligența artificială (AI). Este esențial să înțelegem că tehnologia și robotica nu apar în societăți fără cultură sau valori. Dimpotrivă, aceste instrumente reflectă și perpetuează norme și stereotipuri care există deja în societățile care le dezvoltă. Violența împotriva corpului celuilalt devine mai ușoară atunci când încetăm să-l mai percepem ca pe un egal, când rupem legătura de empatie care ar trebui să ne unească. Deepfakes și alte forumuri care distribuie conținut sexual generat de inteligența artificială intră tocmai în această depersonalizare, reducând femeile la simple obiecte manipulabile. Acest proces de obiectificarea nu numai că perpetuează misoginismul, ci și privează victimele de autonomia și demnitatea lor. Prin urmare, fenomenul deepfake, împreună cu alte conținuturi sexuale generate de inteligența artificială, nu numai că invadează viața privată a femeilor, ci și consolidează structurile de putere patriarhale și atitudinile misogine. Lipsa unei reglementări specifice și ușurința cu care aceste tehnologii pot fi accesate agravează și mai mult această problemă.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** deepfake, prostituție, pornografie, inteligență artificială, patriarhat, tehnologie, feminism, obiectivare, gen, depersonalizare.

## **1. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and gender bias**

*The technology sectors are reproducing old patterns of exploitation and violence against women.*

Torras Genís, Carmen and Delicado-Moratalla Lydia

In its early days, the Internet was presented as a promising space for equitable and democratic interaction, often compared to the public agora of ancient Greece, highlighting its potential to democratize access and participation. However, this idealized vision seems increasingly distant from reality. The Internet, like any other aspect of society, is not exempt from the structures of inequality that persist in the physical world, such as discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, among others. These structures of power and exclusion are reproduced in the digital environment, reflecting the same dynamics of injustice present in the offline reality.

Similarly, the evolution of artificial intelligence (AI) has followed a similar path. In its early stages, it was thought that machines, being based on principles of logic and consistency, would be free of emotional bias and prejudice. However, reality has shown that these technologies are deeply influenced by their human creators and the data they provide. AI learn and replicate the patterns and content that users generate online, and thus perpetuate the same structures of discrimination that prevail in society. Consequently, both the Internet and artificial intelligence are imbricated in a web of inequalities that reflect and amplify existing social dynamics.

All forms of discrimination are rooted in a pre-existing hierarchy. Discrimination cannot manifest itself without a power structure that organizes individuals into different levels of value or status. Chiara Bottici, in the *Anarcafeminist Manifesto*, proposes a hierarchy of beings that she calls 'the great chain of being', a *scala naturae* presided over

by man: “A great chain of being that has so long dominated western metaphysics, the idea of a scala naturae of man (above) > woman (above) > slave (above) > animal (above) > plants (above) > inanimate matter”<sup>1</sup>.

This initial hierarchization establishes a structure that can be even more complex and nuanced when other factors are incorporated, such as race, sexual orientation, religion or ethnicity, among others. However, what is fundamental in this context is to highlight the primary hierarchy that Bottici identifies, which is a gender asymmetry: the distinction and inequality between men and women.

Men and women have been educated differently according to their gender, reflecting and perpetuating existing power structures. Men have received an education oriented towards self-affirmation, fostering a sense of being for oneself, while women have been educated in *being for others*, in care and support for otherness. This differentiation in education and culture contributes to the construction of unequal identities and the perpetuation of traditional roles. Simone de Beauvoir, in declaring that “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman”<sup>2</sup>, not only underscored the process of socialization that shapes female identity, but also illuminated the profound imbalance in subjectivity between women and men. In her influential work *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir exposes how the construction of female identity often entails a devaluation with respect to male identity. Men, occupying a privileged and supposedly neutral position, enjoy a position of superiority that is not only higher in the social hierarchy, but is also presented as the standard against which female identity is measured and compared. This asymmetry reveals how women are constantly defined in relation to men, who stand as the universal standard of humanity and freedom. Chiara Bottici argues that “making us women becomes synonymous with making us unfree subjects”<sup>3</sup>, that is, the construction of female identity entails an inherent restriction on freedom and autonomy, compared to the freedom attributed to men.

The gender hierarchy imposes a structure of inequality that inevitably leads to discrimination. Those who do not occupy higher positions in this hierarchy are subjected to various forms of

discrimination. This phenomenon is clearly reflected both on the Internet and in the field of artificial intelligence (AI). Gender bias, when transferred to these spaces, manifests itself in the form of algorithmic biases that reproduce and reinforce existing inequalities. In her article entitled “Curvy, hunky, kinky: Using corpora as tools for critical analysis”, Caldas-Coulthard exposes how in AI the color pink is associated with femininity<sup>4</sup>. In addition, artificial intelligence often defines men based on their behavior, while women are described based on their appearance and sexuality. This distinction reinforces gender inequality, as the differentiation of criteria for describing men and women indicates an underlying hierarchization.

As author Sara Degli-Esposti points out in her article entitled “The Role of Gender Analysis in Reducing Algorithmic Bias”, female representation in the field of artificial intelligence (AI) is profoundly disproportionate. Globally, women make up just 22% of professionals in this area, a figure that reveals a significant gap in female participation in a crucial sector for the technological future. In Spain, the situation is even more alarming, with only 2% of technology companies led by women<sup>5</sup>. This inequality in representation has important repercussions not only in terms of gender equity, but also in the quality and diversity of emerging technologies. The low presence of women in AI development limits the variety of perspectives and approaches in the creation of these technologies, which in turn contributes to the perpetuation of gender biases in algorithmic systems. In short, the difference in representation and description between genders not only perpetuates inequality, but also demonstrates how gender hierarchization is manifested and maintained through digital and algorithmic technologies.

Pornography, as well as the prostitutional system, are phenomena situated at the intersection between capitalism and patriarchy. Rosa Cobo captures this interrelationship with the following phrase: “Capitalism is interested in the increasing processes of commodification, and patriarchy is interested in that commodity having a woman's body”<sup>6</sup>. This statement underscores how capitalism benefits from the commodification of sexuality, while patriarchy ensures that the object of that commodification is predominantly

female. In their article “Internet pornography and the ritualization of sexual relations”, Ballester, Orte and Pozo argue that the expansion of pornographic content on the Internet has given rise to a new model of consumption that did not previously exist, characterized by its easy access and, in many cases, being free of charge<sup>7</sup>. This increase in the availability of pornography contributes to the creation of a sexual habitus, influencing how people relate sexually and their perception of desire. According to the authors, the ritualization of desire manifests itself in the repeated viewing of the same recorded sexual practices, which establishes a habitual pattern in the consumption of pornographic content. This process of ritualization not only implies a constant repetition of certain content, but also simplifies and standardizes interpersonal relationships by reducing them to predefined and repeatedly visualized patterns. Ritualization, in this context, refers to the way in which Internet content affects sexual perception and expectations, while habit refers to the resulting action<sup>8</sup>.

In pornographic scenes, male desire is often the central and dominant focus. The desire that is satisfied in these videos is primarily male; therefore, it is the female figure that tends to be sexualized. An alarming example is the rise of pornographic content that explores and normalizes pedophilic fantasies. In fact, there is a website called *Dollter*, where you can purchase sex dolls that look like children, even babies. These products not only perpetuate pedophilia, but contribute to its construction, as the market not only responds to existing demands, but also creates new needs to maximize its revenues.

A similar dynamic occurs in the field of artificial intelligence and robotics. Robots, like AI, do not arrive in society in a cultural vacuum; instead, they reflect and perpetuate existing norms and stereotypes. For example, robots designed for household chores, care and care for dependent people are often depicted with feminine characteristics and colors associated with the feminine. This trend reinforces the idea that care work is a natural extension of the female role.

Companies such as *RealBotix*, *DollRobotics* and *Hologirlfriend* have developed female sex robots that are designed to please without emotional reciprocity. These robots have a markedly feminine and

sexualized appearance, which perpetuates and normalizes sexism. Carmen Torras Genís and Lydia Delicado-Moratalla in their article entitled “White and Cold as the North and South Pole: Humans and Robots” point out that the creation of human-shaped robots represents the cutting edge of posthuman sexism. According to the authors, the function of these sex dolls has similarities to that of sex slaves, highlighting the risk inherent in the sexualized, female appearance of these robots<sup>9</sup>. These examples illustrate how artificial intelligence and technology can amplify gender inequalities, reproducing and reinforcing harmful stereotypes rather than promoting genuine equality. Pornography, sex robots, and other technological developments show how sexism manifests and perpetuates itself in a variety of contexts, underscoring the urgent need to address these issues and to foster meaningful change in the way women and girls are represented and treated in contemporary society.

## **2. Deepfake**

Artificial intelligence intervenes in pornography, one of the ways currently is through deepfake, manipulated videos in which the face of one person is superimposed on the body of another, creating a very realistic simulation. This is made possible by advanced AI algorithms, which today are freely available and relatively easy to use. Deepfakes are a direct product of advances in artificial intelligence. Victor Cerdán Martínez and Graciela Padilla Castillo in their article entitled “*Historia del fake audiovisual: deepfake y la mujer en un imaginario falsificado y perverso*” argue that the first video of this type was posted on Reddit in 2017, which indicates that we are dealing with a relatively recent practice<sup>10</sup>. Currently, there are specific applications for its creation, such as the application called *FakeApp*. Although they were not designed exclusively for editing pornographic content, users have found a particularly harmful use. These fake videos are often shared on high-profile pornographic websites, such as *Pornhub*. Although the platform has stated that deepfakes are ethically unacceptable and has blocked searches for the term, the videos continue to appear. The only

measure taken by the website has been to remove the category as such and not allow it to be searched directly on the site.

Many deepfakes use the faces of celebrities, but anyone can be a victim. It is enough to have a few photos of a woman to generate a pornographic video in which her face is superimposed on the body of an actress. It is important to note that there are almost no sexual deepfakes with men as protagonists, which highlights a clear gender inequality in the use of this technology.

In the case of deepfakes, it is not the dissemination of real intimate images, but the creation of fake or digitally manipulated content that is presented as if it were authentic. These generated images or videos mimic the appearance of intimate situations, designed with a high degree of verisimilitude to give the impression that the protagonists were involved in those scenes. Although they do not correspond to genuine moments of their private lives, the precision with which the faces are superimposed on other people's bodies makes them appear credible and, in many cases, difficult to distinguish from real material. Since deepfakes are often used to recreate erotic or pornographic scenes, their dissemination constitutes a serious invasion of the privacy of the persons involved, violating their dignity and exposing them to significant damage to their public image. These videos not only affect their reputation but can also cause them deep emotional and social discomfort, especially because the objective of those who create and disseminate them can range from discredit and humiliation to economic exploitation, obtaining profits through the viralization of this manipulated content. In addition, this type of digital manipulation, which mostly targets women, reflects patterns of symbolic violence, where the body and intimacy are used as tools of abuse, mockery and oppres.

As Martínez and Castillo argue, deepfake is not legislated in Europe, although in the specific case of Spain it could be a typified crime: "because of its purposes, it could be punished as a crime against the right to one's own image, an insult or a hate crime"<sup>11</sup>. This regulatory vacuum is worrying, given that deepfakes represent a growing threat to the privacy and dignity of individuals, especially as their creation and distribution have become more accessible thanks to



rapid technological developments. The authors compare in their article the different use of deepfake in men and women. On platforms such as *YouTube*, deepfakes involving men such as Barack Obama and Nicolas Cage can be found. In one of the most well-known cases, Obama appears giving a speech in which he insults Donald Trump, while in other videos, Nicolas Cage is inserted in movies in which he never acted, generating a comic and surreal effect. These male representations usually play with satire, humor or politics, focusing on the words or actions of the character. However, the reality is different for women. The authors argue, “women star in fake erotic and pornographic scenes; men star in speeches and circumstances related to humor or politics, usually appearing in costume”<sup>12</sup>. The difference in treatment is evident: men are actors in situations created to entertain or shock, while women are relegated to being objects of desire, stripped of control over their image and violated in their dignity.

Jacinto G. Lorca and Elisa García-Mingo in their article entitled “*Busca, busca, perrita: comunidades digitales misóginas de difusión de imágenes sexuales sin consentimiento*” study a page called *Hipasexy* where sexual images of women are shared, whether stolen, filtered or created by AI. Every day 40,000 users access the site and a million new posts appear every day<sup>13</sup>. Pages similar to this one highlight that male homosocialization is largely based on the possession of the nude and the objectification of the female body. Subjects who occupy a space of subordination suffer, in one way or another, a process of objectification. This process of depersonalization has as its objective the rupture of empathy. Primo Levi in his work *If This Is a Man* narrates how prisoners in nazi concentration camps were stripped of their names and given a number, were shaved to eliminate any personality traits, were all dressed in the same way, were not left with cutlery to eat and were even addressed by emitting animalistic sounds. According to Rita Segato in her article “Sex and the norm: state front, patriarchy, dispossession and colonization” men maintain a pact that preserves the pedagogy of cruelty on women's bodies: “Once again we are facing the pedagogy of the pornographic gaze on the body-object of women. A pedagogy of the sacrificial feast of the consumed body as food for the pact between men that thus, in front of

its remains, concelebrates and consolidates. Necessary pedagogy of insensitivity, blocking of empathy and predatory distance, to generate the *esprit-de-corps* of male brotherhood"<sup>14</sup>.

One of the most effective tools to be able to harm the other is depersonalization that can be seen represented through an objectification or animalization of the victim. Violence against the body of the other is facilitated when we do not see him or her as an equal. Patricia Amigot Leache, in her article entitled "Gender, power and violence. An intersubjective approach", reviews some features of the process of objectification proposed by Martha Nussbaum:

- (a) instrumentality, or treating someone as a tool for one's own ends; (b) subtraction of autonomy, or treating someone as if they could not self-determine; (c) passivizing, or treating someone as if they were an object lacking agency; (d) fungibility, or treating someone as if they were interchangeable for objects of the same or different kinds; e) violability, or treating someone as if they lack integrity, which can be accessed and harmed; f) ownership, or treating someone as a possession that can be bought or sold; and g) denial of subjectivity, or treating someone as if they have no or lesser needs, desires, experiences, or knowledge<sup>15</sup>.

Following the seven characteristics of the process of objectification proposed by Martha Nussbaum, the deepfake phenomenon affects all of them, transforming subjects into mere objects of manipulation. Nussbaum points out aspects such as instrumentalization, denial of autonomy and reification, all present in the creation and distribution of deepfakes. By objectifying people, especially women, through the creation of fake videos where they are stripped of their humanity, we are breaking empathy and placing ourselves in a hierarchical position, where the creator or consumer of this content assumes power over the body and image of the other. Deepfake, although presented as a technological trend with countless creative possibilities, has been used mainly for harmful purposes, such

as the creation of fake pornographic videos with the faces of women, both famous and anonymous. This practice constitutes a direct violation of their right to privacy and dignity. The potential of deepfake for other applications, such as film or art, is overshadowed by its exploitation in the creation of non-consensual sexual content, reflecting a worrying lack of ethics in the use of this technology.

### **3. Conclusion**

In concluding this discourse, it is essential to remember that, while the satisfaction of individual desires is important and the freedom to pursue those desires is a central value in contemporary societies, we must not lose sight of collective rights and the responsibility we have towards others. This approach, where individual desires are the central driver, often forgets the implications that these may have on the rights of others, especially those in a position of vulnerability. I strongly advocate that the rights of women affected by deepfakes, and their fundamental right to dignity, are far more important than the individual desires of those who create and consume this type of content. Personal satisfaction should never justify harm to others, especially when that harm involves the exploitation and objectification of their bodies and identities.

Philosophy has a huge responsibility in this contemporary context: it must stop focusing solely on freedom and individual desires and start thinking deeply about equality and rights. It is not just a matter of pursuing our desires but doing so in a way that respects the rights of others. The paths we take to achieve our aspirations are fraught with ethical implications, and it is at this crossroads between desires and rights that philosophical reflection becomes more necessary than ever. The priority must be to build a world where human dignity cannot be sacrificed in the name of any desire, however legitimate it may seem.

## Notes:

- <sup>1</sup> Bottici, Chiara, *Manifiesto Anarcafeminista* (Barcelona: Ned Ediciones, 2021), 31.
- <sup>2</sup> Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2021), 341.
- <sup>3</sup> Bottici, *Manifiesto Anarcafeminista*, 90.
- <sup>4</sup> Caldas-Coulthard, Carmen Rosa, Moon Rosamund, "Curvy, hunky, kinky: Using corpora as tools for critical análisis," in *Discourse And Society* (2010), 116.
- <sup>5</sup> Degli-Esposti, Sara, "The Role of Gender Analysis in Reducing Algorithmic Bias," in *Mujer y Economía: Igualdad, Oportunidades y retos* (Madrid, 2021), 138.
- <sup>6</sup> Cobo, Rosa, *La prostitución en el corazón del capitalismo* (Madrid: La Catarata, 2020), 156.
- <sup>7</sup> Ballester Brage Lluís, Orte Socías Carmen and Pozo Gordaliza Rosario, "Internet pornography and the ritualization of sexual relations," in *Congreso Internacional sobre Investigación y Género* (Madrid, 2014), 853.
- <sup>8</sup> Ballester, Orte and Gordaliza, "Internet pornography and the ritualization of sexual relations," 855.
- <sup>9</sup> Degli-Esposti Sara, "The Role of Gender Analysis in Reducing Algorithmic Bias," in *Mujer y Economía: Igualdad, Oportunidades y retos* (Madrid, 2021), 134.
- <sup>10</sup> Cerdán Martínez Víctor and Padilla Castillo Graciela, "History of audiovisual fake: deepfake and women in a falsified and perverse imaginary," in *Revista Universidad Complutense* (Madrid: 2019), 514.
- <sup>11</sup> Cerdán and Padilla, *History of audiovisual fake: deepfake and women in a falsified and perverse imaginary*, 512.
- <sup>12</sup> Cerdán and Padilla, *History of audiovisual fake: deepfake and women in a falsified and perverse imaginary*, 516-517.
- <sup>13</sup> Gutiérrez Lorca Jacinto and García-Mingo Elisa, "Search, search bitch: misogynistic digital communities that spread sexual images without consent," in *Revista Universidad Complutense de Madrid* (Madrid, 2023), 20.
- <sup>14</sup> Segato Rita, "Sex and the norm: state front, patriarchy, dispossession, coloniality," in *Journal of Feminist Studies* (2014), 608-609.
- <sup>15</sup> Amigot Leache Patricia, "Gender, power and violence. An intersubjective approach," in *Revista Política y Sociedad* (Madrid, 2022), 7.

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